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Pages 317-320 Comparison of
Irving's style and Macaulay's
Pg. 35 - King and all other Constitutional
authorities (dictators and Democracies) hold
their power of and under God.
In spite of modern writers
that all power originates from
the people, and is for the people
held".

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The three series of Practical Discourses on "Prayer," "Praise," and "Family and Social Religion," which compose the greater part of this volume, were preached to Mr Irving's congregation in Hatton Garden, in the years 1823–24*—soon after his settlement in London. Of the "Discourses on Public Occasions," which complete the volume, the dates are given in foot-notes.*

ON PRAYER.

ON PRAYER.

I.

THE REASONABLENESS AND RULE OF PRAYER.

MATT. VI. 8.

Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.

THE avocations of God, however manifold, do not hinder Him in the least from bestowing as much attention upon this earth as if He had nothing else to attend to; and to suppose the contrary, is to transfer to Him the ideas and attributes of a limited creature. If we judge from the fine balance which there is between the necessities of nature and the supplies of Providence,—the rare occurrence of famine or starvation upon the earth, and the ample means of meeting these occurences by prudent foresight and proper economy,—from the adaptation of every creature to its abode, and of the productions of the region to its wants, and in general from God's being so ready even much beforehand with His gifts to man and beast, we shall, instead of concluding against a similar intercourse between the Creator and the creature in things religious, conclude that here also there should be a correspondence of want and of supply, of request and of gift. It is very well, therefore, for men who have made a few advances into the knowledge of the universe, to conjecture from its ample population that the Creator has not time to attend to our little wants, when it is the universal acknowledgment of the learned, that the least microscopic insect is as richly furnished with organic

structures and beautiful adaptation to its birthplace and habitation, as if the Almighty had occupied His faculties upon that invisible creature alone. Another cavil against prayer is drawn from the unchangeableness of God, which is founded in bad reasoning, as the other is founded in imperfect knowledge. God's unchangeableness is the very foundation of desire, and hope, and activity, in things religious as in things natural. The uniformity of nature's operations in the one, and the constancy of God's promises in the other, give aim and calculation and certainty to events ; God's promises being so many pledges of His procedure, upon the immutability of which the Christian conceives hope and anticipation, and waits for accomplishment. It is His unchangeableness that gives confidence so soon as you know what His purposes are. Of these purposes the Scripture is the record. They are laws like those of the Medes and Persians, which alter not, and their fulfilment may be built on as securely as the rising of the sun, or the revolution of the heavens, or the most stable of nature's courses. This objection is another instance of the ease with which men find objections to religion, and you have only to apply it to another subject in order to discern its fallacy. Let me do so for a moment with that now in question. In the administration of justice, its inflexibleness or unchangeableness is that very quality which makes all men bold in offering their petitions in its courts. If it were at the call of power, or party, or selfishness, or favouritism, or even of mercy, it would be unheeded, instead of awfully respected, and surely calculated on. So far from hindering men from addressing prayers which are consistent with the laws promulgated, its steadiness of purpose is the very life of all such petitions. A man has no sooner claim for redress than he expects it and sues it out. A man is no sooner defrauded in an inferior court, than he expects and petitions for justice in a superior. The flocking of all the injured in the kingdom to the judges as they go their rounds, and to the magistrates where they reside, is the clearest proof of the effect of an unchangeable mode of operations in begetting confidence, and calling forth active and urgent requests. Now, it is so not only in matters of justice, but every other department of our affairs. A father that is

constant in his procedure is sure to beget expectation, and desire, and confidence in his children; who, knowing where to find his will and pleasure, look for it, and converse of it, and calculate on it as a thing secure. A friend that is constant in his friendship, a counsellor that is constant in his wisdom, a master that is constant in his requirements, a man that is consistent in his public or private behaviour,—each one of these begets expectation and anticipation, which are the very food of desire and of prayer. For there is little or no desire of a thing which we have no hope of obtaining. It is the expectation begotten which turns chance or indifference into desire, and the desire to possess is the only thing which can justify the request to obtain. So that without expectation there is no prayer properly so called, and without constancy of procedure no expectation will be generated; so that constancy is the soul of prayer.

On the other hand, I am willing to allow, that while constancy, either in the laws of nature, or the ways of men, or the promises of God, begets expectation and desire and prayer in that direction to which they constantly tend, it never fails to destroy expectation, and along with it desire and prayer, in the opposite direction. If justice be inflexible, it is vain to petition against it; if a father be unbending from the rules of his household, his children soon learn to confine their wishes and prayers within the given bounds. And a friend who is known to be stanch, is not bored with undermining surmises; nor a counsellor that is always wise, with fallacious sophisms; nor a master that is firm, with vain suits for relaxation. While steadiness of purpose and character is the life of expectation and prayer within the bounds of its fixed procedure, it is the death of all without them.

Now, though these illustrations bring out by example the truth of that doctrine, that the unchangeableness of God, instead of begetting torpor, is like the loadstone, which, though restful itself, draws all things towards it, that it is all the ground upon which rests that anticipation which is both wind and sails to the movements of the mind; yet these same illustrations, especially that from justice and an unchangeable father, have in them a hardness and sternness which may have

engendered a wrong conception of God, which it is necessary to remove before advancing further. If God's promises did embrace nothing but abstract justice, and did measure out nice and strict desert, then their unchangeableness were the death-blow to all expectation of future weal; but seeing they contain mercy, and forgiveness, and peace, and everlasting blessedness to all who receive His oracles and walk thereby,—being a rule not to equity only, but a rule to mercy and to bounty, and to whatever else is amiable and attractive to the soul of man,—it comes to pass that their stability and unchangeableness is the stability and unchangeableness of that wise, and wide, and lovely administration which sufficeth to comfort and upbind the fallen, as well as to strike down and discomfit the refractory and rebellious.

It may be said, It is all true which you advance, that God's promises, by reason of His unchangeableness, may be relied on, and that expectation of their fulfilment will generate itself; but what occasion, then, of prayer, seeing the thing promised will come round of its own steady accord, whether you open your lips or no? To this the answer is short and simple. These promises are made only to those who expect and desire and ask for them. They are not promised indifferently, and come not of their own accord to all, but to such only who have meditated them, and who value them, and desire them, and earnestly seek them; being, in truth, too valuable to be thrown about to a scrambling mob; being the high and holy attractions by which God intended to work upon the nature of man, and lead it out of its present low and sunken estate into glorious liberty and unwearied ambition of every noble excellence. They are prizes in the hand of God to stimulate the soul's activities,—more glorious prizes than laurel wreaths, or the trumpetings of fame, or principalities and thrones,—and they are yielded only to an application of faculties, at the least, as intense and ardent as is put forth in pursuit of human ambition. God doth not cheapen His promises down to a glance at them with the eye, or a mouthing of them with the tongue, but He requireth of those that would have them an admiration equal to that of lovers, an estimation equal to that of royal diadems, and a pursuit equal to

that of Olympic prizes. He hath promised them, He hath pledged His faithfulness to give them only, to such strong and ardent desires; and no one need expect them of course, or even think to deserve them by often asking, but by having a raging thirst and an inconsolable want of them. At the same time, while the gifts are thus restricted to those who eagerly covet them, there is enough to induce the desire of all mankind to whom they are offered. God doth not require men, as it were, to lash themselves into a furious desire of His favours before He will confer them, but He has given evidence and argument enough of their importance to work upon the reasonable mind their admiration and desire. The advantage of them in time, and the advantage of them in eternity,—the high price that was paid for them, even the precious blood of Christ,—their continual increase and growth,—their everlasting duration,—and the honour of receiving them from Almighty God, and being acknowledged as His esteemed and favoured people;—these and a thousand other points of value, when taken into balance against the things that set the chase and hunt of the world on foot, should naturally give them such a decided preference, and work in the mind such an admiration and longing desire, that it is to be concluded nothing but self-will and self-blinded obstinacy keep men from that earnest desire which is all that God requires to the free gift of them.

It now remains that, in conformity with this principle, upon which alone prayer can reasonably proceed, we draw out for practical advantage what constitutes a genuine prayer, to which an answer may be expected. Agreeably to the doctrine which hath been advanced, no man can calculate upon an answer to his prayers, except upon the unchangeableness of God's promises. If God had promised nothing, we could have expected nothing: and if His promises were not steadfast, we might have been deceived in our expectation. Therefore it is that the first revelation was a promise, and the revelations to Noah and to Abraham were promises, and the law was a prefiguration of good things to come, and the prophecies are dark declarations of the events of promises, and the gifts of God's Spirit, with all the attainments of the Chris-

tian life, are promises, and the Apocalypse is a promise extending to the end of time; and when it comes to pass that there are no promises unaccomplished, then will prayer cease: but that will never be, till prayer and all other instruments of grace be rendered useless by the revelation of glory, when instead of faith shall come honour, and in place of hope the things hoped for.

The first step towards prayer, therefore, is the knowledge of the promises of God, which are, as it were, the charter to go by. They are the edicts of His government, from which He hath sworn by His unchangeableness that He will not depart. Further than these revealed purposes, His will is an impenetrable mystery, into which we have neither the right nor the power to penetrate. The man who adds to his prayers a request that God would manifest Himself in another way of operation than He hath promised to do, is guilty of the great impiety of setting his own will on a level with the Almighty's; he also impeacheth the sufficiency of God's bounty, and proveth himself either ignorant of, or ungrateful for, the largeness and freeness of His grace. But most of all doth he transgress in praying for a thing without any hope of obtaining it. The Scripture being so peremptory as to allow no shadow of chance to a prayer which hath not faith; let not the man that doubteth think that he shall receive anything from the Lord; and there can be no faith where there is no petition. But, besides, no one, for his own sake, should presume to ask anything which God has not pledged Himself to give; because if he were possessed of it, it would not advantage him in the end. It was not because He could spare no more, that God promised no more; He is not impoverished by giving, nor by withholding is He enriched. He gave us the best He had to give—His only-begotten Son, with whom He will refuse us nothing. Providence and protection He hath promised us in the life that now is; glory and immortality in the life that is to come. He hath permitted us to ask at His hand, His favour, which is life, and His loving-kindness, which is better than life. His Spirit, whose fruits are joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, patience, meekness, faith, and temperance, He longeth to impart to us. That Wisdom whose ways are ways of pleasant-

ness, and whose paths are peace,—in whose right hand is length of days, in her left riches and honour, is also within our reach. That wisdom from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, and gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of good fruits, without guile and without partiality, is open to every one that will ask of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not. Wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, the peace of mind that passeth understanding, the joy with which the world doth not intermeddle,—in short, every good and every perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning. No one who knows the largeness and liberality of the Divine promises, will complain of their being scanty. The roll of the promises let down from heaven is more full of varied food for the spirit of man, than that great sheet which the apostle saw in vision was full of varied food for his body. They are a goodly body of most gracious intentions, full of imperishable riches, an apt and sufficient store for equipping the immortal spirit for its wilderness-journey, and, moreover, like the ark of Noah, containing the seeds and rudiments of everything which can minister to her necessities and enjoyments in that new world where she is soon to rest for ever; or, according to St Peter, they are like so many beacons lighted up in the dark, wild, and untrodden future, whereunto we do well that we take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in our hearts. And, to carry the figure a little further, in each of these enlightened beacons resides an oracle from the Most High to guide the goings forth of the believer's hopes and purposes. In sight of these he is not far from tidings of the land to which he sojourns; out of sight of them, he is guideless, aimless, and helpless, in the midst of a wide and waste ocean of uncertainty.

All the arguments building prayer upon the unchangeableness of God go for nothing so soon as we travel beyond the record into wishes of our own not included in the covenant. Then truly, the nature of the thing being changed, we change sides in the argument, and inquire with the objector, Who are you, to dictate times to God? If what you ask be against His promises, think you He will reverse His fixed and stead-

fast purpose, to which the ends of the earth are looking, for the sake of your crude device? If it be beyond the scope of the promises, will He enlarge His counsels and designs, confess Himself narrow-hearted, and allow His nature to be wrought upon and cajoled, and give in to the presumption of a mortal? Besides, what an ungrateful wretch art thou to ask for more than the Son of God, with all the things which are promised with Him,—the kingdom of God and His righteousness, with the "all things" that shall be added thereunto!

In reason, therefore, and in gratitude to God for His many great and gracious promises, the scope and spirit of our prayer should be limited by the promises of God. This is to make prayer a matter of serious premeditation. And, to keep it progressive with an understanding of the Scriptures, a knowledge of the purpose of God must precede it; and without that knowledge it is an empty form, or rather a sinful liberty taken with the ear of God. As if you would go to a judge and ask him to favour your case, or to a friend and ask him to do you a wrong; or it is as if having received intelligence from a distant correspondent, you should presume to write back to him upon the subject, without being at the pains to peruse what he had said. It is most lamentable to hear very often how this necessary rule of prayer is broken through, and with what rude unprepared language the ear of God is vexed. They heap petition upon petition, with a volubility that defies all order, and sets all scriptural reference at naught. They heat themselves into a glow of enthusiasm, and pour out rhapsodies of words without weight, and multitudes of petitions without warrant. Repetition follows repetition, topic is wrought into and warped with topic, the language and tones of familiar conversation are taken, until all reverence depart from the mind both of speaker and hearer, and it becomes to the one the most silly and commonplace of all mental employments, to the other the most unheeded and the most heartless of all services. I deny not that the way into the Holiest is open to all; but it should never be forgotten that it is a consecrated way, never to be profaned. Well cleaned was the body of the high priest, and pure was his raiment, and great the preparation, ere he ventured into the Holy of Holies. Pure

also should be our thoughts from all unscriptural admixture, and well ordered the words of our mouth, and great our spiritual preparation, and reverently grave the frame of our soul, before entering the presence of no emblem, but of Jehovah himself. Send these very people, that make so slight and stupid an affair of speaking to Him that rules on earth and heaven,—send them to ask a favour of superior in Church or State, and see how it will interest their hearts and occupy their minds. Set them to write a petition for preferment in any worldly interest, and see how it cramps their wits to express it in becoming style and with skilful address. I consider it the highest vocation by far to which a man's faculties can be called, to demean his spirit properly in prayer to Almighty God—incomparably the gravest, weightiest, and most productive part of the public service. And did I not think that discoursing was one of the best instruments for urging, inspiriting, and furnishing the mind for private and public devotions, I would rate it in a very inferior place. Discoursing is to be esteemed as an awakening to prayer—it summons the mind from its worldly, unspiritual haunts and avocations, arrests it with thoughts of its eternity and immortality, binds it to heaven by cords of love and hope and interest, informs it of God's ample promises and its own high and heavenly vocation, and so, by argument and holy eloquence, aims at bringing on those very frames of mind which are proper to prayer, and without which prayer is an unmeaning ceremony, or a direct insult to the Majesty on high.

The result, therefore, both of our appeal to reason and to the sense of God's majesty is this, that unless we take pains to acquaint ourselves with the purposes and promises of God, we pray altogether at random, wandering at large in the imagination of our own hearts. The first requisite, therefore, to prayer is, knowledge of the Scriptures, where God's gifts are laid out in full plenty. Unless a study be made of them, it is impossible they can come to be proved. After the knowledge of them, come the estimation, the desire, and the pursuit of them; to which we can only glance at present. They must grow in the mind, by frequent medi-

tation, into their due importance, from which they are edged out by the multifarious objects of sight and time to take a hold on the heart, like riches, or love, or health, or renown, ere they will pull with any force. I ask, what has God's Spirit to work withal against Satan's full possession of the human faculties,—what power, what instrument hath he but those objects in the picture which God sets before us? Strike out peace with God, peace with the world, and peace with conscience at home,—strike out the conquest over our passions and our evil affections,—strike out heaven, and all that is beyond the grave, and what power has the Spirit of God over our hearts or our lives? By these gentle, noble influences, God hath purposed to stir us up, and draw us out of our present abject condition. He therefore made them known, placing them in such lights and colours as are attractive to our nature. But how shall our nature thereby become attracted, if we send our regards, our thoughts, our hopes, into other quarters, passionately admiring, fondly pursuing that from which it was God's purpose to wean our nature? We must turn about and look the other way. We must study and inquire into the things unseen, until they come to beget ardour within the soul. If they are worth the having, they are worth the knowing; and they never yet were had, nor never shall be had, without most strong and solicitous pursuit.

If we do not feel much, what do we ask for? God doth not admit men as kings do courtiers, for ends of idle state. His state is sustained by another kind of creature than man. We are suitors for mercy, having been rebels; we are petitioners for supplies, being blind, and naked, and poor, and miserable; we are under a load of debt, without aught to pay, and we are suing out a free discharge; we are promised that free discharge, and we are reverently pleading on that promise, and gratefully acknowledging the same. Oh, it moves the inward parts of a pious heart, and ruffles it all with holy indignation, to see the mean mistaken views of prayer. One comes and says prayers to shew his respect to the Church,—another, out of custom,—a third, to while away an hour,—a fourth, to get the entertainment of the after-piece, and he oft comes rudely stalking in at unseasonable hours, through the

silent, solemn ranks of the worshipping people he parades himself, as if he would draw away the attention of the congregation from God unto himself. Out upon all such worshippers, I would say, unless it were the still small hope of recalling them to the love and admiration and veneration of God. Let us have men, men of a pious mood, men of understanding in the Scriptures, men of a panting spirit after godly things, —then have we a proper band for carrying up petitions of grievance, of right, and of reverent desire unto the Lord.

Blame me not, my Christian friends, for uttering deep feelings in bold and ardent language. Until the cause of our immortal souls be pleaded with greater feeling and boldness, it will fare as now it doth. Its present languishment is the weakness of its advocation. Our ears are accustomed to tameness and temperateness, when there should be warmth and soul-stirring energy; and we have come to associate with methodistical rant that fervour which, in the senate or at the bar, being present to a good cause, and grounded on a strong argument, would be held becoming the occasion, and honourable to the feelings of the speaker. Therefore, we begin with laying our foundation on strong argument. And for the cause is nothing less than the honour of the Godhead and the success of your prayers, which is your salvation, therefore we again reject, with high indignation, from the subject of prayer all these paltry feelings of decency, and prudence, and expediency, calling upon you to meditate the majesty of God you speak to, the mighty interests you are pleading for, the encouragements to come into His courts; so that with the triple cord of reverence, zeal, and expectation, you may draw down the things which are agreeable to His will. The spirit would faint before His majesty, were it not the abundance of His grace. Anxiety over such mighty stakes would make hope to flutter, were it not the unchangeableness of His purposes. And to ask so much after having abused so much already given, would be beyond all boldness, did we not know that it was purchased for us, and ready to be delivered out to every one who in good faith desires to have it. Let us, therefore, examine into our condition, and ascertain our manifold wants. Let us examine the Word of God, and see there our necessities most

abundantly provided for. Then, out of craving hunger and assured confidence, let us advance into the presence of God, by the new and living way which hath been opened up by the blood of Christ,—assured that a father would as soon give to his hungry child a stone or a scorpion, as God will refuse His good gifts to them who ask Him.

II.

THE INESTIMABLE ADVANTAGE OF PRAYER.

MATT. VI. 8.

Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.

IN this discourse which we have thought it good to hold on prayer in general, we have thus far laid the foundation of the duty in the unchangeableness of God, and shewed that there is no meaning nor hope, but on the other hand much presumption and folly, in prayer, unless it keep by these promises of God which form the ground upon which the soul is privileged to indulge anticipation, and even certainty, of success. We would now go on to speak, from the place we have reached in your conviction, upon the inestimable advantage to be gained from prosecuting prayer after this only reasonable and scriptural principle, of holding by the revealed purposes and gracious promises of God.

And in the first place, just as we come to love a fellow-mortal by becoming acquainted with his good and generous intentions to mankind in general and to ourselves in particular, even so we shall come to love the Almighty, when we learn by the knowledge of His promises how great is His goodness to the sons of men. There is no way of falling in love with the Divine nature but by knowing His mind and purpose, which, being unchangeable, is the secret record of His performances. For here on earth, such is the nature of human instability, and the limitations of human power, and the rapid flight of time, that a man plentiful in promises or professions is either suspected for a deceiver or held as inexperienced in his narrow means. But God having in Him that truthfulness and stability of purpose over which we were all agreed, both objectors and

favourers of prayer, the number of His promises becomes an exact measure to the magnitude of His goodness; while His power almighty is pledge of His ability to perform all for which He undertakes. And for that mysterious attribute of existence called time, whatever it is, He made it also, and will make it long and durable enough for containing the accomplishment of His design. Therefore, the more promises we find the Almighty to have made, we have not only the more securities over the welfare of the future, but the more ties of admiration, and gratitude, and love, to bind anew the sympathy between creature and Creator which the fall hath erased from human nature. Every promise is a new instance of His excellent attributes, and a new argument to our souls to unite with Him in tender fellowship. Then, moreover, according as we discover the length and breadth of His promises, we come also to discover the extent of His sovereignty over the supply of all our needs. We find that He hath made a promise for the bread which we eat, and for the raiment wherewith we are clothed,—that He hath made a promise for the rain which watereth the earth, and for the dew which maketh the outgoings of the evening and the morning to rejoice,—that His bow in the heaven is a promise of seed-time and harvest, to endure for the nourishment of everything that lives. We find also that He holdeth the gifts of knowledge, and understanding, and a sound mind in His hand, and serveth them out to the minds of men; that power also is His, and length of days, and riches, and honour. All those regions which aforetime floated in our minds as the domain of fickle fortune, or were given into the hands of a fixed fate, or made dependent on the agency and free-will of man, turn out, upon knowing the promises of God, to be administrations of His bounty to sustain the world and comfort its afflicted state—remnants of His gifts which He did not remove at the great forfeiture of all our joy and bliss, but secured for ever as divine attractions to hold us to Himself against the great current of sin drifting us away into the cold and frozen regions of the mind, where He is forgotten and unknown. Thus fortune, and fate, and human power, and every adventure and change in human life, become hung and suspended from the throne of God, so soon as we

comprehend the revelation of the Almighty's purposes. The atheism of human thought and the godliness of human action pass away, and instead come a knowledge of the divine nature, and a confidence in the divine promises. The blankness and blackness of the future become all enlivened with light; and footing is found for the bright daughters of Hope to clear the way for warm wishes and constant purposes to follow after, and the fancy of the poet is realised—

> "Hope springs eternal in the human breast,
> Man never is, but always to be blest."

Having thus gathered, by perusal of God's revelations, how much in the past time, when we did not acknowledge Him, He was working out the health and happiness of our life,—how the sun did rise and the rain did descend upon our fields all the same as upon the fields of the righteous and devout,—we become wonder-struck with a sense of His forgiveness and His good-will to the worst of men. We say, What could induce Him to feed, and clothe, and comfort us who were shutting our ears to the knowledge, and steeling our hearts to the feeling of His goodness, and counter-working all His gracious designs? Why did He not contract His bounty or send the stream of it another way? We deserved nothing; we returned Him nothing. Surely His loving-kindness hath been great and His forbearance unspeakable to us, while we followed false and fabulous imaginations: how much more kindly loving, and how much more forbearing will He be now when we give ourselves to search into His revealed purposes and to walk in all His statutes and commandments!

Thus the soul, when she betaketh herself to consult the counsels of the Lord, cometh to love Him at every new discovery of His carefulness, and to admire His mercy and forgiveness and most disinterested goodness towards her, while she lay enveloped in a darkness of her own making.

But I have spoken hitherto only of the lost provinces of creation and providence, which are thus restored to the ownership of God. What shall I say of the new provinces of grace and glory, which then for the first time come within the limits of the mind? Then the soul beginneth to expand her wings,

and arise to heaven, and float over the visions of eternity; then she soareth like the eagle, and looks steadily into the face of God. She feeleth for His Spirit within her, and setteth her heart upon divine excellence. So many predictions and promises of God to put her corruption to death and reconcile her unto Himself, to write "holiness" upon all her members, and "holiness" upon her inward parts, and strike fruits of righteousness in her barren bosom, and take away her hard and stony heart and give her a heart of flesh, upon the tablets whereof to write His laws, that it may be a temple for His Holy Spirit to dwell in,—to hide all her transgressions and cover up all her sins,—to give her rest from a clamorous conscience and accusing fears, that she may have peace, and be refreshed with the full river of joy which maketh glad the city of God;—these promises, no less abundantly made than faithfully executed, draw us to God with cords of the strongest love, as all our salvation and all our joy. Thus cometh the end and communication of His love—the fulness of future glory, worthy, and alone worthy, to have such a procession of creation, and providence, and grace, the three visible kingdoms of the Almighty's bounty. The promises which fetch this out from the hidden place, beyond the limits of time and visible things, are the brightest of all the rest. This body, the seed-bed of pains and diseases, the nurse of appetites and passions strong, shall be renovated most glorious to behold, most durable, most sweetly compacted, and yielding most exquisite sensations of bliss. This society, so ripe with deceivers, betrayers, slanderers, and workers of all mischief, shall be winnowed of all its chaff, and constituted anew under God's own government. Then shall be conjoined such intimacies and loving unions as shall put to the blush friendship, and love, and brotherhood, and every terrestrial affinity; and the soul which peeps and feels here about the surface of things, shall dive then into the mysteries of knowledge; and intuition shall see far and near the essences of all created things; and all knowledge shall fan flames of benevolence, and feel eternal purposes of well-doing to every creature within our reach. All heaven shall smile for us,—for us every

neighbouring creature shall labour, and we for them,—and angels with the sons of men shall exchange innocent love,—and the creatures under man shall serve him with love, and drink from him their joy, as we shall drink our joy from God. Oh, who shall tell the glory of these new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness! The imagery of inspired minds is exhausted on the theme, and all their descriptions, I am convinced, fall as far short of the reality as the description of nature's beauty is weak, compared with the sight and feeling of her charms,—all language is a pale reflection of thought, all thought a pale reflection of present sensation, and all sensation this world hath ever generated a sickly slight idea of what shall be hereafter.

Now, these revelations of God, touching His presidency over the four great kingdoms of His dispensations,—creation, providence, grace, and glory,—are all unknown, until out of the promises we discover them. Prayer, therefore, which rests upon the promises, and can rest upon nothing else, by drawing our minds to them, makes us familiar with all the character of God, and His inexpressible love towards mortals. Such knowledge will, if anything will, produce upon the mind attachment to God. Most certainly no attachment to Him can rationally exist till the character of His operations come to be known. God is not to be beloved by sympathy of heart or similarity of conscious nature, as man loveth his fellow-man. His manner of existence is a mystery, undisclosed and undiscernible, and unfelt by every creature. He liveth unapproachable. What He is, where He is, how He is, no created thing can understand. All knowledge of Him and love of Him must come from beholding some of His works, or feeling His workmanship within us, or rejoicing in the power He hath denied to us, or knowing the counsels and intentions of His mind. These are all expounded in the record of His promises, and of His performances, which are only promises fulfilled. Therefore, it stands constant that until these promises are studied and trusted to, no sincere love or generous devotion to the Godhead will divulge itself in our thoughts, words, or deeds; and that when they are fixed and

rooted in the mind, there is no end to the delight which it will have in fulfilling the will and pleasure of Him who doth so much and intends so much for its everlasting welfare.

If so much advantage is likely to flow from the mere knowledge of God's promises or designs, which is only the preparation for prayer, as it were the laying up of the materials, how much more may be expected when the mind digests and incorporates them into its own being, which we shewed to be indispensable to the right performance of the duty! Then prayer comes to be the great instrument of religious discipline, requiring all our hopes, and wishes, and apprehensions, to fall into the same union with the Lord's intentions. Our schemes must be redressed after the Divine pattern,—our desires restrained to the Divine gifts,—our labours conformed to the Divine rule,—our dependence removed to the Almighty arm. The outlookings of the mind into the future, its anticipations of things to come, the nature of its joys and sorrows, of its hopes and fears, become altered so soon as the rule by which it governs itself is taken from the promises of God. And as the tact and energy of action depends entirely upon the bent of our designs, it will come about from this new regulation of our purposes that our life will acquire a new character, and our enterprises be conducted after a different spirit; so that prayer is the education of the soul, its discipline for the field of duty, without which there can be no success in the ways of righteousness. For no man ever acted well without having well forecast his actions; certainly no man ever acted with any heart till he loved and desired the ends of his actions. This love, this desire of holy ends, which must precede the effectual fervent pursuit of them, we shewed to be indispensable to the success of prayer; so that prayer is, as it were, the middle stage between the conceiving of good in the mind and the realising of it in the life.

For in all this discourse you will perceive that I hold the promises to be the guides of our actions as well as of our prayers, seeing it cannot be that we are enamoured of anything without endeavouring what in us lies to possess it; so that if we thirst after the things promised by God, we will take steps to obtain them, seeing that His promises make

them not only hopeful, but even certain to those who follow them with a sincere desire and in the appointed way. The whole of a Christian's transactions, from morning to night, should be an endeavour after some good thing held up by God as the prize of his holy industry. His labours, mechanical or mercantile, literary or political, should be pursued with the hope of obtaining that daily bread which the Lord, in permitting us to ask, has permitted us to expect; or, if daily bread be already ours, then, for ends of benevolence or charity, to win some more substance than we need in our own household, that we may devote it to God's glory. Every Christian I regard to be like the bee, sucking sweetness from sourness and turning poisons into wholesome food. Whatever he accumulates is so much stored from the enemy, which the enemy would have consumed on lust, or ostentation, or wickedness. It is a conquest made from debateable ground, and being in our hands can be turned to godly purpose. Thus the hours of labour, which make such encroachments upon our disposable time, may be peopled with holy intentions, which will effectually banish from the details of business all meanness and fraud. Thus we fulfil the commandment of the apostle, to be "active in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Likewise, at home, our walk and conversation, the rearing of our children, and the well-ordering of our house, our hospitality to acquaintances and entertainment of strangers, our residences and our removals, should all be regulated so as to obtain for ourselves, our families, and our circle of friends, those personal graces and those social excellences which God hath promised to His people. Our public and political interests no less—our debates, our speeches, our associations, whether in religious or social bodies, and our behaviour there—should all have a straight intention to uphold virtue, and honour, and religion, and every other pillar of the public weal; so that, from morning to latest evening, at home and abroad, in the closet, in the street, and the various rendezvous of active men, we may, nay, should, have it in our eye, to select some landmark of promise erected by God to guide our undertakings.

Now it may be said, What then availeth prayer, which you

call the stepping-stone between holy conceptions and holy endeavours to bring these conceptions into being?—how does it confirm the one or expedite the other? My brethren, were you ever full of any purpose without longing to unbosom yourselves to your friend? Were you ever well counselled by a friend without thanking him for his counsel? Did you ever eagerly enter on a thing without seeking the favour of those on whom it depended? Were you ever successful in a hard encounter without thanking those that had given you a hand in your strait? The tongue, which to other animals is but an instrument of tasting their food or roaring for their prey, was in man gifted with language, and melody, and heavenly eloquence, to be the great bond of society, by communicating with more than electric speed between heart and heart the ten thousand emotions which arise therein. Not to utter these emotions, but to let them die untold, is to bury the soul in the sepulchre of the body, instead of letting it forth to sway the souls and bodies of other men. So prayer is the employment of the tongue to its noblest purpose, of recounting unto the Lord the experiences of His goodness which occupy the breast. It would have been cruel in God not to have allowed the bosom so to speak its pious emotions. Had He commanded them to be imprisoned there when they were working, it would have been hard and fearful to endure. But God is not the Father of such tyranny: He sets no spies upon the words of His servants, nor does He require from them set forms of speech, but permits them as they feel so to speak, before the multitude, in public places, in audience before Himself, in the closet or in the solitudes of nature. Oh, it would have been a fell bondage to endure had He said, "You shall not speak my praise for this rich treasure of promise,—you shall not invoke my aid in the pursuit of those prizes of your high calling,—you shall not return me thanks in the happy hour of your success, or sing me songs of jubilee while you enjoy the harvests of my bounty." Who is he that calleth prayer a bondage? who is he that wondereth God should require it, or disliketh to render it according to His will? Then that man's bosom is a desert wilderness, where no divine graces are implanted, where no divine pro-

mises shine bright; his life is a worldly turmoil after empty gains or airy fantastic joys,—no diligent endeavour after the gains and enjoyments which God hath sanctioned and made patent by His promises. That man knoweth not of whom he holds the wonders of his creation, or the goods of his providence; he is in the dark upon the riches of grace and the rewards of glory. Prayer is not a bondage to a heart that is full of holy feeling, and a head that is full of divine knowledge; but it is the language which the promptings of the thoughts within us sends rushing to our tongue, which it were the cruellest bondage of nature to stifle. Why, it were to muzzle reason, and knowledge, and piety, and purpose, and gratitude, and devotion,—to doom to deep dungeons of silence the spirit which boundeth for the liberty of utterance and enterprise. And who could endure that confinement? It were death, and worse than death, to be first charged with so much elastic, buoyant, resolute animation, and then bound down to rest and quietude by the same power which filled us. Have ye seen a dumb man under strong mental excitement? How he distorts his countenance with fearful expression, and his body with frightful gesture, and opens wide the portals of speech, and strives to give motion to his fastened tongue, while hollow workings of ineffectual sound are heard deep in his breast, and his whole body, hands and feet, and writhing frame, labour and are in distress,—so that the very soul of every beholder is touched with pity and deep regret to see a fellow-creature so frustrated of the glorious faculty of expressing thought! Even such unspeakable pain, such severe amputation of the religious man's nature, would you cause were ye to deprive him of prayer, which is the utterance of strong desire, and purpose, and feeling unto his Maker. Oh, it were heartless and cheerless to be cut off from such communications! You might as lief take God from the universe as prevent the soul holding intercourse with Him. What were all His disclosures, and all His advices, and all His promises and commandments, if He had taken Himself far away, and drawn a deafening veil between His hearing ear and the habitation of mortal man! Then He were no longer a Father to appeal to for protection,—a

Friend to apply to for aid,—an almighty Power to trust in for success,—a Comforter into whose bosom to utter our grief,—a Companion to take with us into our dangers, and our troubles, and our exiles. They know not the effects of prayer upon every faculty of the religious man who would deprive him of its use.

All power of cool argument forsakes our mind when we think of the advantage of prayer. Then come floating before memory a thousand hapless conditions which prayer alone could comfort: pining prisoners and persecuted worthies, saints forced into exile, religious heroes bound to toil at the oar of triumphant power, all come arrayed in the contentment and joy which this privilege brought them in their calamities; orphan children, weeping over a last parent departed, come, heartened by the assurance of another Parent who never departs; widows, mourning over him that won the bread of themselves and their children, come, being comforted with the providence and presence of Him who is a Husband to the widow, and a Father to the fatherless; hearts broken by oppression, despair begotten by the faithlessness of man, adversity's bleak day and bitter food, cheered by the assurance that the children of the righteous shall never beg their bread; virtue blackened by slanderous tongues, patriotism borne down and misjudged by selfishness, religion held hypocrisy, benevolence railed at as ostentation, and the thousand other mistakes and mistreatments of the world,—all comforted by the bosom of God, into which we can utter our complaints and look for righteous judgment;—all these unhappy conditions, ministered to by promises of Scripture, and visited with hope of better things to come, and never deserted by the presence and ear of God, come rushing before our mind in discoursing of prayer, and leave neither temper nor time for deliberate argument.

These rapid sketches of thoughts, which it would take many discourses to develop into regular and well-built argument, we leave to produce their own effects; but not without prayer to the Most High for their success, seeing it would be a confutation of ourselves did we not, however full of desire or laborious in endeavour after your spiritual edifica-

tion, seek the same from the Lord with all prayer and supplication. May He who first appointed the foolishness of preaching for the salvation of men, and who by His presence in earthen vessels hath in every age enriched His Church with a holy people, bless these words of weakness and ignorance to the persuasion and conversion of many souls; and so kindle in our breasts the love of prayer, as that we shall meditate with great delight this prayer first spoken by the lips of His only-begotten Son, and derive much fruit of righteousness from the same! And may He signalise the commencement of the year to this people by working in their hearts a stronger fervency of purpose after the performance of His will, and a closer application at His throne for the fulfilment of all His promises!

III.

ITS APPROPRIATE PLACE AND OCCASION.

MATT. VI. 5, 6.

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

THE form of prayer commonly called the Lord's Prayer, to which it is our purpose in the strength of God to bend our thoughts, was not given upon an occasion formally set for that purpose, but stands in the heart of the sermon which Christ delivered to His disciples from the mount. It is not even one complete topic of that discourse, but only part of a topic, which begins with the verses that we now read, and continues two verses beyond the conclusion of the prayer. This topic is of prayer in general, and comes in between the kindred topics of almsgiving and fasting. These three, almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, form a distinct division of the sermon, which might be entitled "Of acts of religious worship;" therefore it would be injustice to the Lord's design to take up His prayer as a separate and distinct lesson, without considering the abuses which it was intended to rebuke. For we shall see, as we advance along the train of thought which introduces it, that it was not a separate study upon the fittest form of prayer, but a practical exposure of certain mistaken practices which existed and still exist in that most important part of Divine worship.

You will regard it, therefore, as proceeding, not from a taste for prolixity, but from a desire to apprehend the meaning of our Lord, that we enter upon this topic from the beginning

and follow it out unto the end, endeavouring to ascertain the design and intention of this prayer as a whole, that we may know precisely where to place it in our judgment, and what use to make of it in our devotions. With this view, we have read out the two first verses, which make us acquainted with an abuse common in our Lord's age, and we suppose in every age, of making prayer a passport to the favour and friendship of men. They likewise point out the way in which that abuse is to be corrected. Then follows, in the two next verses, an abuse, not proceeding, like the last, from design, but from the mistaken idea that we shall be heard according to the length and frequent repetition of our prayers; to remove which He gives the assurance that God knows all that we need before we ask Him. Having corrected these two forms of abuse, whereof the one originates in fraud and hypocrisy, the other in erroneous notions, He proceeds to give an example which should illustrate His views and serve as a model to His disciples. This done, He adds a condition upon which alone God will hear our prayers for forgiveness—that we be forgiving towards those who have trespassed against us. So that His instruction upon this subject of prayer hath in it the nature of a regular discourse, first pointing out the evil practices He would correct, and the proper way of correcting them; then giving an example illustrative of His doctrine; and finally deducing from the practice a wholesome lesson of mutual forgiveness and friendship. Following in the same track, we would endeavour, in like manner, to expose the hypocrisy and instruct the ignorance which exist in the practice of prayer; then shew forth the excellent point of this specimen, as well as the import of its several petitions; after which it will remain to connect heaven with earth, by shewing that we must behave by our fellow-men when they petition us as we would have God behave by ourselves when we petition Him. May the Lord, from whom cometh both human understanding and the unction of the Holy Ghost, so endow our faculties and bless our discourse, as to make it profitable to every worshipper in this place, that he who still walketh in darkness may be enlightened, and every one who walketh in the light may be encouraged!

The refined state of society in which we live, and the shrewd observation cast upon every man from a thousand eyes, and, above all, the illumination of the age, have driven the hypocrites from making their prayers in the streets to be seen of men. In Catholic countries it still exists under the fostering hand of ignorance and superstition, where you will behold them in places of resort diligently telling their beads, or with their eyes bent in seeming adoration upon the image of a crucified Jesus. But we have no such custom in these Protestant countries, where street-praying, so far from winning favour to any one, would expose him to be hooted by the mob as one who was practising upon their credulity, or seized by the police as one who was interrupting the course of affairs. In this dispensation which we have got from the psalm-singing parades of continental Protestants, and the endless processions of Catholics, with the mummery of mendicant friars of every name, we should be thankful to the providence of God over these lands, and the righteous spirit of our forefathers, who would not brook such impostures upon their good sense, and insolences towards God. It is good to find the Founder of our faith, in whose words I love to peruse His religion, and from whose life to copy it, so strenuously set against all unnecessary exposure of our religion to public gaze. It falls sweetly in with the good sense and feelings of men who love to cover what they revere from the public gaze. No one of any feeling or prudence speaks before a mixed assembly of the happiness he hath at home, of his affection for his wife or children, or any other sentiment which lies near to his heart. These he keeps for the ear of his particular and beloved friend, and for seasons which are hallowed by the tenderest and closest fellowship. In such respect and reverence Christ wisheth religion to be holden. Our intercourse and communion with God He wisheth to be more hallowed than loving affection or tender friendship, whose delight is not to be gazed upon but to be felt, and which have all their reward in the inward happiness which they yield; and you may rest assured, that so soon as prayer comes to be appreciated as a refined and noble exercise of the heart, it will not need a commandment of Christ to drive it from the

eye of men, but of its own accord will seek the time and place at which the heart is best fitted to partake it. While by-standers were present, Joseph carried out his part with his brethren; and when Judah pleaded that Benjamin should be allowed to go for their old father's sake, and that he would remain behind a captive in his room, being overcome he could no longer refrain himself; yet, before he would allow his feelings vent, he cried, "Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him while Joseph made himself known to his brethren; and he wept aloud." This is a pure stroke of nature, a genuine exhibition of a true-hearted man. God hath not taken the name of a Father, nor Christ of an Elder Brother for nought, but because these names import more nearly than any other the nature of the affection which they bear towards us. Therefore, like Joseph to his brethren, pour out your souls to Christ alone; like Christ to His heavenly Father, pour out your souls to God in retired and solitary places. This is the chief mark to distinguish true feeling from the affectation of feeling, sentiment from sentimentality, that the one is choice and prudent in its signs and utterances, the other rash and forward and always intruding. And the reason of this is obvious: one who feels truly never expresses anything which he is not at the moment feeling; and the heart does not feel at will, but when proper objects and occasions move it. But the other, thinking it fine and becoming to be accounted tender-hearted, learns the language and plays the part when any observers are by, and the consequence is, that, like stage-players, he loses the capacity of true feeling, and is usually the dullest to recognise an object worthy of emotion, and the deafest to listen to a real call upon his sympathies and help. Therefore I counsel you to take heed to our Saviour's doctrine, as grafted upon human nature, and suit the time and place to the thing. For even though out of genuine piety you were to make prayers under the eye of men irreverently engaged, you would be apt in time to lose the proper feeling, and fall under some of the evil influences which attend upon ostentation and effect.

It is not, however, the place so much as the motive our Lord rebukes: "to be seen of men." I can conceive, nay, I

have felt, that in the midst of a crowded city, while the body is making its way along the streets to its proper destination, the mind will be wandering over the ends of the earth, or ruminating over future schemes, or reflecting on past adventures, or entertaining itself with thoughts of wickedness and folly. Every passing object will set it on a new hunt, every curious article of merchandise awakening fresh wonder, and every known character leading to some reflections often not charitable to him or honourable to our Christian feelings. Now, as it is not the occasional feast but the daily fare which nourishes the body, so it is not the stated services but the constantly-recurring feelings and thoughts which nourish the soul. One act of envy is as injurious as one act of true devotion is beneficial; one surrender to vanity, or voluptuousness, or anger, will destroy the good effects of one surrender to self-abasement, self-denial, or self-command. It is the keeping the heart, out of which are the issues of life, and devoting the whole soul, and mind, and strength, and might, which constitute the service of God. Therefore, do not think, because Christ excommunicates such religious acts as may be seen of men from being performed in streets and unbecoming places, that He hinders the mind from turning itself then and there to serious and solemn subjects, or permits it a free range of unholy thoughts. His holy law is over us in the street as much as at home; piety of heart is there as incumbent as in sacred assemblies. And I see not why, in our musings by the way, we should not, like Bunyan's pilgrims, turn to solemn and serious things, — why the vain spectacles we behold should not excite trains of disgust rather than of envy, and suggest silent prayers to be kept from these temptations,— why the wicked sons and daughters of Belial whom we meet should not suggest prayer for their repentance and reformation,—and why the schemes on whose execution we are bustling about should not suggest silent prayer for their success. It would indicate a hardened heart and an unimaginative mind to move about our streets without any thoughts or endeavours suggested by all that we behold. So it indicates an irreligious mind when none of those thoughts have a bearing upon religion, and an undevout mind when

none of them have a reference to God. And in the same manner as it would be insincere towards God to utter prayers when we have no movements of pious desire, so would it be unjust to ourselves not to allow ourselves in these pious trains of thought and silent ejaculations of heart. They have not the form of prayer, but in God's sight they are all the same, and without such constant discipline the heart will have no feelings to pour out when in good earnest we address ourselves to our devotions.

There is one other proviso that I will make before leaving the subject of praying in the streets—that it may become necessary, and in this very city hath become necessary, from the hardships of the times. Not much more than a century ago the Society of Friends were hindered from assembling in their houses of prayer; and, to shew that they would obey God rather than man, they did not forsake the assembling of themselves together, but convened in the street before the door, and bore whatever penalties arbitrary power might impose upon them; and I think they acted like men that were not ashamed of the testimony of Christ. And in the present times, when the multitude forsake the house of God, and wander like scattered sheep among the fields, any pious man would do service both to God and to their souls, who could speak to them with effect, and persuade them to listen to him while he set forth their duty, and prayed to God for their sakes. These do not act to be seen of men, but to save men. They go after souls like the shepherd after the strayed sheep; and while they conduct themselves with prudence, and preserve order among those whom they gather together, every good and pious person, I think, will give them his countenance and blessing. Not that I consider field worship as likely to be so useful as worship within doors, but that it is better than idle strollings and ale-house or tea-garden assemblies. Isaac went out to meditate in the fields at even-tide, and our Lord spent whole nights in devotion under the silent canopy of heaven; so that there is no reason, but the greater convenience of the thing, that our devotion should be restricted to household places. He needeth not temples made with hands, He needeth not the intervening words of liturgy or priest—these

are things of expediency alone. The heart, the genuine sentiments and desires of the heart, is all He asks; the place, the time, the words are nothing, but as they help to suggest emotions which otherwise might be dormant, or deliver us of emotions which might distress us for want of utterance.

Next in our Saviour's catalogue of abuses comes prayer made in the synagogue to be seen of men. Now, in thinking over with myself to what people in this day the same charge will apply, I regret to think it should be applicable to so many. Indeed, hardly any are to be excepted, save those who present themselves in the house of God out of true and sincere devotion. Those who are there from a regard to grave and decent custom are clearly chargeable with making prayer to be seen of men; because a deference to custom is nothing more than a tribute offered for the good-will of others. Those who join in the prayers of the Church to patronise with their presence so good an institution are still more chargeable, for they go expecting to be taken notice of, and thinking to give an *éclat* to the Lord's assembly by their appearance. Those, again, who go out of respect to the pastor are also courters of observation, and those who go to please their friends, or to keep the good graces of their masters, or because it becomes their station; within which lists will come a larger proportion of worshippers than I would choose to guess at. As was said in a former discourse, there are respectable feelings everywhere but in the house of God; which is a *sanctum sanctorum*, a holy of holies, that frowns upon sentiments which, at home, or in houses of business, or in courts of justice, or anywhere else, would be allowable. We meet here under the eye of Him that is the Almighty, we meet here on purpose to secrete ourselves from intruding thoughts of time and temporal things, we bring no book but the Word of God, we utter no voice but the praises of God, we allow no intrusion, we suffer no interruption,—all which conventional customs of this house are to signify that in truth the place and the time should be set apart to God alone; the soul should look to Him alone, and, save His all-seeing eye, no eye should be regarded. Therefore, we are not excusable if we mingle any foreign ingredients in the spiritual cup of our

libation, if we sacrifice to show, or outward form, or ancient custom, or interest, or anything else, than to Him who seeth in secret and rewardeth openly. It is of the utmost importance, brethren, that we carefully examine what spirit we are of, and what purposes are moving us when we enter this house and stand up to present our supplications at the throne. He is not far from any one of us; not, however, as a spy, but as a God who judgeth righteous judgments. A petition coming from a heart otherwise occupied hath in it no virtue. It doth not benefit the heart of him who conceives it, nor doth it pierce the ear of him who hears it. Attention with difficulty keeps alive, the contagion of thoughtlessness catches, and a whole assembly will sometimes seem as drowsy and heedless in their prayers as if they were uttered by the priest in a tongue unknown. Much of this listlessness may be caused by himself: if he feels not what he utters, the dulness and monotony of his words will not be long of bringing the most hearty worshipper into a condition of heartlessness of which he is ashamed. But much of it also arises from the people: if in spite of all his sincerity and zeal the preacher cannot fix their minds, if there be not the stillness of thoughtful men, if there be the rustling of many movements, if there be the interruption of rude incomers, and the eager gaze of many eyes turning to inspect him,—this will soon convey itself to the eye or ear of the minister, and draw his mind from the elevation and entire absorption of prayer in despite of himself. That there may be a heartfelt service, there must be genuine feelings of devotion on both sides; and if the heart feels not for those things it professes to want, how can we expect God should? Therefore, that there may be any return to our prayers, any open and manifest reward, do be at pains to purge your minds of all unworthy and improper motives before crossing this sacred threshold,—take a muster of your serious thoughts,—remember the days of old, full of gracious fruits,—look to the future, full of immortal destinies,—weigh your lives in a balance,—measure your wants with a measure,—meditate the fulness of the promises of God; and, being thus filled with suitable feelings, you shall find the exercise of prayer to be a relief rather than a trouble, a thing which

nature calls for, rather than a thing at which she murmurs. While I thus instruct you, I would not be unmindful to take the lesson to myself, being convinced that much of the coldness of the assembly, especially in extempore prayers, ariseth from him whose heart and lips go before those of the people. It is a solemn function and too little thought of, and though we would not be critical, yet we cannot pass, when discoursing of prayer in the synagogue, without noting the humbleness and vulgarity, both of style and manner, which many conceive themselves privileged to use before Him before whom Moses prayed in the sublimest strains, Daniel in the most heart-searching, Christ in the most reverent, and all with the utmost stretch of soul. Let any one read these prayers and others recorded in Scripture,—as that of Deborah and Barak for Sisera's overthrow, that of Solomon at the dedication of the temple, the prayers interspersed through the Psalms, the adoration throughout the Prophets, the benedictions throughout the Apostles,—and mark the fervid and deep emotion of heart, the lofty and exalted sentiments of the Godhead, the breathing and burning adoration, the calm and settled repose in His providence and grace, and the secure anticipations of future glory; let him then come into the house of prayer, and witness in their room cold intellect, and narrow form, and dogmatical orthodoxy, and mean language, and meaner manner, and he will see how the glory is departed. Our prayers have more the air of disquisitions and creeds than of devotional exercises. They are expressions, not so much of our heart as of our faith; they travel within a narrow compass of feelings and wants, instead of embracing the whole scope of our spiritual and bodily necessities, to which God hath ministered abundant promises. They are often a tribute rather to the popularity of received opinion than to the all-seeing and unchangeable God. And if men were not fallen into a tame neutrality upon religion, if they were stirred by it as by political or worldly affairs, they would call and crave for some more powerful and effectual presentation of their case before the Lord, instead of delighting to have their narrow-minded prescriptive orthodoxy of opinion sacrificed

to at the shrine of God, where no sacrifice is received but that of a sincere and fervent heart.

In correction of these and all other hypocritical abuses of prayer, He commands us to enter into our closet, and having shut the door, to pray to our Father in secret. Those who can possess the convenience of literally performing this commandment will understand it literally; those who have not will understand it figuratively to mean, that of all employments of the mind, prayer should be the most sincere and confidential,—that it should not need to seek any foreign excitement of place or persons, but depend alone upon the heart of the petitioner and the ear of Him who is besought. It does not forbid the devotions of the sanctuary, or of the family, if they be not performed out of regard to human custom or authority; but it intimates, that if to these there be not superadded the exercises of the closet, or of the solitary mind, these are to be suspected as proceeding from sinister and unworthy motives. He would not have commanded, beyond all these, secret confessions and devotions, if public or domestic would of themselves suffice. He gives, as a test of sincerity, the matter of fact whether we so employ ourselves in secret. He does not go into an enumeration of the many shapes which hypocrisy may assume so as to deceive our very selves, but gives us at once a sign that cannot be mistaken, whether we employ ourselves as diligently in secret. For it is not natural for two hearts which love each other dearly to be content with interviews before others. Everywhere their manner towards each other will speak their mutual affection, but much will they long to talk of it and manifest it to each other unobserved. I take you to witness if this be not true, that you may receive many flattering compliments and much flowery praise from a public speaker in a public place, who all the while in his heart regards you not, perhaps hates you, for those very qualities to which, to save appearances, he is obliged to render a public tribute. And do not enemies and rivals, when accident brings them together into domestic society, cover with seeming courtesy the wounds which they bear from each other? What a deal of courtesy and good-

will and friendly intercourse shall take place amongst men who, next day, shall not have a friendly salutation or greeting to tender to each other! You bring the matter to the test by a private interview,—you try your sentiments when no one hears,—you pledge your faith when no one witnesses, and you wait to see whether it stands good. You ask a favour,—a private favour between yourselves,—and see whether it is granted. To this same test Christ would bring our prayers. When you are alone, whitherward wander your thoughts? To God? When your cogitations are weighing the past or pondering the future, is God's providence and God's promise in the foreground of the picture? When your eye wakes by night upon your sleepless pillow, what within the mind filleth up the void which darkness and silence hath made without? Is it God? Do you bend the knee to God, and has your heart warmth, your tongue liberal utterance, your soul deep absorption? Doth time flee on wings of haste, and sitteth rapture upon all the faculties of your mind? So that when you stretch your limbs upon the bed, calm and sweet repose steals over you, as sweet and silent twilight falleth upon the noisy, garish day. And when unconscious sleep hath drawn a midnight curtain over conscious nature, do heavenly, holy visions come flitting across the natural fancy? And when God looseth again the downy chain of sleep, and light visits your eyelids, do your thoughts turn again to God, and a flush of gladness burst over your heart that He hath brought you again out of the realm of unconscious being? Do your words arrange themselves into matins of praise to Him who maketh the outgoings of the evening and the morning to rejoice over you? Then, indeed, it is well;—your heavenly devotions, your public worship, will come forth nobly and acceptably after such preparation, and the favour of the Lord shall be your excellent reward.

In arguing between these two principles of prayer,—to be seen of men, and to be seen of God,—our Saviour displays His characteristical meekness, saying of the former, "Verily, it hath its reward;" of the latter, "God, who seeth in secret, shall reward it openly." But what a difference is there in these two calm declarations of the truth, and what an argument of pre-

ference in the one over the other! "It hath its reward:" it receives what it works for—the approbation of men, a good name upon the earth, perhaps some favour from those who patronise godliness in the land, perhaps an unfounded confidence of God's favour. "It hath its reward." And what is it worth? It is worth the countenance of a few changeable, short-lived creatures,—it is worth the breath of the public tongue, which, like Jonah's gourd, is oft exhausted in a day; perhaps, if it escape detection, it is worth the outward gloss of a few fleeting years, and a monument, perhaps, and a godly inscription; and then it ends. Yes, it hath it. And what doth it avail? Will these witnesses stand us good at the throne of God? or will that monumental inscription be taken in evidence at the solemn bar of judgment?

But openly, before angels and before men, in the world that is, and in the world that is to come, will the Lord bring forth with praise, and load with benefits, those who looked to Him and prayed to Him in the confidence and affection of their hearts. They may be held cheap, and of small reputation, and have no admission to stately cathedrals and royal chapels; and on high days and holy days their paltry, shabby dresses may keep them far aloof from crimsoned altars and pompous rituals; but as God liveth, they who seek Him with their heart shall in their heart possess Him. For though He be the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity and the praises thereof, He dwelleth also with those who are of a humble and a contrite heart, and who tremble at His word.

Therefore, beloved brethren, be of one mind to worship the Lord God in your hearts and to seek Him for His own sake, keeping your foot when you enter into the house of God, and not offering the sacrifice of fools, that you may possess His benefits in answer to your prayers, and live in the assurance of His salvation through Christ; to whom be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen!

IV.

THE SPIRIT OF APPROACH TO GOD.

MATT. VI. 7, 8.

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.

THERE is no one who believes in a God that has not a certain notion, accurate or inaccurate, of His nature, and by which the character of His worship is determined. It is religion when it goes upon accurate conceptions; superstition, when it goes upon inaccurate conceptions; and between these there are a thousand varieties formed by the intermixture of the two. Our feelings towards God, in the same way as our feelings towards man, depend upon the notion we have of His character. It is natural to love whatever is merciful and kind, to stand in awe of what is just and upright, to admire enlargement and comprehension of mind, and delight in liberality and benevolence of heart;—as natural is it to fear tyranny, to hate vindictiveness, and to be vexed by the neighbourhood of suspicion. We cannot help ourselves in this matter, so as to love what is not lovely, or hate what is not hateful. We may disguise or misname the feeling which we have, but we cannot hinder it from arising and producing its effects. According, therefore, as our idea of God takes in the amiable, and the venerable, and the just, or takes in the suspicious, and the arbitrary, and the vindictive attributes of being, our feelings towards Him will be generous and joyful, or timorous and painful—our service of Him heartfelt and ennobling, or slavish and degrading; and the only way of correcting any abuse which may exist in the worship of God is to remove the misconception upon which

that abuse is founded. Accordingly our Saviour, in the case before us of vain repetitions in prayer, just states the mistake in which it originates,—"they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking,"—and then corrects it by the injunction, "Your heavenly Father knows what things ye have need of before ye ask him." In the same spirit, we would endeavour to correct abuses in the worship of God, by enlightening the understanding upon the nature of Him whom ye worship. This we shall do in the following discourses, reserving ourselves to another occasion for bringing forward the practical abuses unwittingly gone into in the present times. To-day, we propound the remedy, which is the better knowledge; next Lord's day we shall apply it to the disease, which is undesigned offence in worshipping God. This we do, trusting in His grace to open our own understanding, and find favour in your minds for our instructions.

It is most natural for the mind of man to transfer to other intelligent creatures the form, and feeling, and character with which he is so familiar in himself. If any one will examine what is his notion of an angel, he will find that it consists of human form, with human energies, and human affections. So also God was at first conceived to be of form and feature, and passion and action, similar to man, and was so sculptured by the ancient artists and set forth by their mythologists. The Jews were hindered from making an image of the Divinity, that they might derive their knowledge of Him, not from beholding with the sense a polished work of man's fingers, but from perusing the facts recorded of His ways, and the description given of His character, in their inspired books. Yet so prone is man to connect human form with intelligence, that they were constantly lapsing into idolatry and setting up images before their eyes. We Christians, at least we Protestants, are delivered from the sensible imagery with which the ancients invested their idea of God; but there is hardly any Christian whose conception of God is free from some ingredient of human nature. I consider that one great use of God manifest in the flesh was to give us a form of Godhead upon which we might concentrate the various affections of our nature, and be joined to Him as humanity is joined to

humanity; and, therefore, I see no objections to artists putting forth their imaginations upon the person of Christ. This incarnation of the Divinity was designed to address man's compound nature through every avenue and by every winning method, in order that having won its loves, it might forward them to the adoration of the invisible God, who hath no form that it may be beheld, who hath no dwelling-place that it may be approached unto, but dwelleth evermore in light inaccessible and full of glory, hath His seat in every pious heart, and filleth all existence with life and joy. Christ, therefore, I regard as the avenue through which the soul reacheth to God. Christ's visible person I regard as the great preservative from idolatry, being the legitimate presentation of the nature of God to all the faculties of man; and, save through Him as the avenue, no one, it seems to me, can win his way to the unformed, incorporeal Godhead; and, therefore, all Unitarian and Socinian doctrines are to be held as cutting asunder the bridge and pathway which God hath made for the mind to pass from the conception it is familiar with here below to the conception of Himself. They take the words God is painted with; but what are words compared with life and gesture, with sight, touch, and living spirit. They take the cold words, but will not take the image God impressed of Himself upon clay; and their religion will never come to have in it any heat, warmth, or affection. It is as if a man should conceive love from the description of a female form, and live upon that unsubstantial feeling, and refuse to see, or hear, or hold intercourse with the fair object of his entranced affection. But, by the way, I may remark, that however serviceable the incarnation be to prevent us from idolatry, I have observed it produce the opposite effects. I have witnessed a devotedness to the incarnate Deity, a resoluteness to rise no higher, or conceive no further, a fondness for the hymns that exalt His living attributes, a disrelish for those which set forth the Deity not incarnate,—in short, a limitation of all their sympathies to the manifestation of God in Judea for three short years, which, in my opinion, vergeth and inclineth to idolatry itself, and is the indulgence

of that very corporeal taste in things divine which the ancients built their religion upon, and which the Jews constantly hungered after. They greatly err in this, and, I think, greatly offend; for Christ while He lived drew men to the Father, and commended men to the Father, setting Himself just as the way to the Father, as the Word of God, and the life of men. So also the apostles call Him "the form of God," "the image of God," "the brightness of His countenance," "the new and living way," "the High Priest to the holy of holies," "the Mediator" or "Daysman," "the Advocate," "the Intercessor,"—all indicative of some step beyond to be taken through His aid and intervention.—To return.

There is nothing more to be guarded against than this investiture of God with human attributes, to which we are the more inclined from the images of fluctuating, imperfect humanity with which the inspired writers have found it necessary to shadow Him forth to our apprehension. They say, God is angry with the wicked; and we straightway fancy His nature to be ruffled with the affection of anger; but it means simply that the wicked shall experience the same effects from His providence and judgment as they would from one whom they had set on edge against them by their flagrant misconduct. The Scriptures say God repenteth; and immediately we fancy that He is unsteady in His mind, and revolveth in various directions according to circumstances; and so we seek to steal a march upon Him, by flattery, by entreaty, by pertinacity, as we would do upon a mortal. But it means simply, that if we change our courses for the better, we shall have a corresponding improvement in all our treatment and experience, in the feelings of our own breast, and in all the happiness which human nature enjoyeth. So also He is said to hear and answer prayer, and we are commanded to fill our mouths with arguments, and make Him acquainted with our wants; and we straightway infer that the stronger we can make our case, the more frequent and pressing our solicitations, the more copious our petitions, and the more necessitous our whole condition, the more chance we shall have of a favourable hearing and a liberal reply. This is the particular

prejudice against which Christ guards us in the text before us, and to which He applies the remedy, that God knows all beforehand.

I would not, by what hath been said above, disrobe God of those human sympathies which the Scriptures have attributed to Him, and rebuke as criminal the imagination of these to reside in Him; but I would rebuke the adding others of our own imagining. I think these affections are necessary to be imagined in Him, in order to awaken the kindred sentiments in our own breast;—that we must invest Him with the qualities of a Father in order to approach Him with affection; and with the qualities of a generous Benefactor, in order to approach Him with hope; and with the qualities of a Patron of happiness, in order to approach Him with joy; and also with the qualities of Almighty Governor, that our affection may not fall into freedom; and, above all, with the qualities of the Searcher of hearts, that we may be driven from all untruth, and disguise, and deception. The perusal of His acts and promises is useful, as it enables us to build up within our minds these general conceptions of the Godhead, and to create the moral and spiritual image of the Deity to which we render our homage: His paternal providence of all, testified through His Word, convincing us of His Fatherhood; His unbounded liberality of promise and providence, convincing us of His generosity; His penetration through all disguises, and unravelling of all mystery, convincing us of His heart-searching and rein-trying knowledge; His anticipation of all our necessities, convincing us of His perfect acquaintance with every want which our tongue can express.

We do not, therefore, discourage the forming of these similitudes of Father, Governor, Benefactor, King, and Omnipresent Beholder, by what we have said of the danger of arraying God in human attributes. Take every character upon earth which awakens noble sentiments and warm attachments, you shall find it applicable to God for His works and promises, and you shall most likely find it applied to Him in the inspired Scriptures. But we warn you against applying to Him the weaknesses and imperfections of man, which have the effect of awakening unworthy affections towards Him.

For instance, when you think of His heart-searching attribute, associate nothing with it of prying, or spying, or holding over us the office of an inquisitor, but associate it with the qualities of a true, wise, and penetrating judge, who detects hypocrisy only to encourage merit, and give a fair field for truth and open dealing. When you think of His sovereignty, and are carrying up petitions to Him, oh! think not as the devotees do of an arbitrary, stern, and terrible Being, who must be crouched to and fawned upon, or gained over by severity upon ourselves, but think of a perfect Governor, who loves all His subjects, knows all their wants, and wisheth them all happiness under His government.

Now, brethren, in order to be guarded against thus degrading by unworthy associations the nature of God, to which we are prone from the constant connexion there is here between fallen nature and moral attributes of being, and to which we are further prone from the imperfect nature of language, which typifies things unseen by things seen, things perfect by things imperfect,—in order to be so guarded, you must summon up the faculties of your understanding to understand the revelation of God, to harmonise its several statements in your minds, to collate one part with another, to check one duty by another, and not to run into the extremes of folly to which ignorant, outlandish, vain sectaries are often led by the constant meditation and enforcement of some one passage or strain of passages, to the oblivion, nay, to the utter obliteration of all the rest. Summon up the gift that is in you of a sound mind, exercise the judgment and discretion in religion which you do in business and action, rank and enroll yourselves under no leader. We speak, or we should speak, as unto wise men, and ye should be the judges, not the advocates, of what we say;—at least Paul, not surely the least enlightened of Christian preachers, was of this mind. "We speak," says he, "as unto wise men; judge ye." Until your minds stir themselves up to as much earnestness, and be patient of as much thought upon religion as upon other concerns, they will never escape out of the snares which the devil layeth to deceive our understanding, and so degrade our worship and service of the living God.

Now to apply these remarks to the case in hand, of praying to God. Nothing will defend us from manifold errors but the distinct adherence to that principle which we have laid down as the foundation and guide of prayer—the principle that God's promises, not floating fancies, or evanescent feelings, are the warrant and the guide of prayer,—His promises standing to the future of things spiritual in the same place that past experience doth to the future of things natural. We did not admit one petition which was not congenial with the spirit of promise or prophecy. Now, this principle embraces the principle of our text—that God knows what we have need of; nay, not only knows, but hath promised to grant it. It is not to inform Him, therefore, that we make our wants known, for it is He that hath informed us in His promises; it is not to supplicate Him, in the ordinary sense of that word,—that is, to bend Him to our purpose by pitiful language,—for He is already full of compassion and waiteth to be gracious; it is not to turn Him round to favour us, for He hath equal favour for all men, and His ear is open to the cry of all His children. Neither ought we to approach Him as enthusiasts do, as if He had a special interest in and loved us above all others; nor as fanatics do, as if God were beholden to them, and under a necessity to supply them; nor as devotees do, who have fasted all day long, inflicted penalties upon their spirit, if not also upon their body, and come to God with a claim of rights for Him to discharge. But we should approach Him as the Father of an infinite majesty and the God plenteous in mercy,—as the Inventor of all the promises, which He will surely fulfil,—as the Giver of His only-begotten Son, the greatest and the best of gifts, a sign and pledge that He will refuse us none of the lesser gifts. We should come to Him out of the conviction that He is ready to receive us through the channel of His blessed Son our Saviour; we should lay our wants before Him, because we feel them pressing upon us; we should ask them of Him as a child does food of a tender father, because we hunger, and know that He will and alone can give us.

But something much more minute than these general reasonings and directions is necessary to guide the spirit of

our prayers, and prevent them from becoming degrading to our own character and unacceptable to God; for, as we said at the outset of this discourse, there are a thousand shades between pure and superstitious worship, according to the quantity of truth or error that is mixed up in our conception of God. I conceive this subject to be of such importance that I shall endeavour to classify some of those sources of error and expose them, that ye may be upon your guard; and the first to which I shall devote what remains of this discourse is the common error of conceiving God as a sovereign, who proceeds by will in the conferring of His favours, and not by any stated rule.

That this association of arbitrariness and wilfulness with our idea of God's sovereignty should be popular in countries which know nothing of government but as power proceeding blindly to the execution of its wishes in the face of wisdom, and justice, and mercy, we do not wonder; but that it should ever have got a hearing in a country where power is hated when it destroys the right and feelings of mankind in the birth, is to me utterly unintelligible. But seeing it has got a hold of the religious world, it only operates with the more baneful effect against religion, through that hatred which this people hath ever had against arbitrary power. Now it is a pity that any one should be disaffected to religion, through the ignorant and unfledged conceptions of its advocates, when they have the oracles of God to go to, which shew it to be a gross, unfounded prejudice that God's purposes are so many enactments which may or may not consist with wisdom and equity. They were all balanced and ordained at first by God's wisdom and equity; and those of them that are revealed in the promises are all capable of approving themselves to man's wisdom and man's sense of equity, so far as they can be understood by man; and it is equally a mistake that they come into execution by unexpected and unaccountable fits of activity on the part of God's Spirit—strong exertions of Divine power making way for themselves, all practices and principles notwithstanding. Do we then mean to assert that the Almighty is overruled in His plans and operations by anything in us or the things which He hath made? This notion

is still more absurd—putting God to a stand in His purposes until He be helped out by things which He hath himself to set into being and action. But this extreme is not necessary to be run into in order to escape from the other. The Almighty's sovereignty lies in His having had no guide but that of His own attributes in constructing all things. In the arrangement of the world, natural and moral, in giving to everything its properties and habitation, He was not intermeddled with by any power foreign to Himself;—He was a law unto Himself, and sought counsel of no one, as there was no one of whom counsel could be had. But think you at that time His wisdom was asleep, or His goodness, or His tender mercy, and that wilfulness ruled alone? Strictly speaking, there is no wilfulness, no arbitrariness, with God. Every act has an end, and is merely planned to bring that end about. Then only is it will, when one cannot, or chooseth not, to proceed by rule or reason. Of this will there is none with God. Wisdom singeth a song of the busy occupation she had with Him before He had prepared the world, or set a compass upon the face of the deep; the Prince of mercy says He was with Him in the beginning, and incorporated in His nature; often do Justice and Holiness speak for themselves—"He is just in all His ways, and holy in all His works;" but I have not found where absolute Will sets up such a claim. It is true that, being alone and unaided when He devised, and being alone and unaided when He carries His decrees into effect, there is something akin to the nature of arbitrary power, where only one ruleth all. But give me that one, wise enough, just enough, merciful enough, and powerful enough, to carry his wisdom, justice, and goodness into effect,—let there be no caprice, nor malice, nor infirmity of any sort,—then to whom could the government of all be so well committed? It is because no such man can be found, that you introduce those checks against the weak parts of human nature—those checks in which liberty consists. But God surely needeth no such checks; and if He did, who could interpose them? He lacketh not wisdom, nor penetration, nor foresight, to lay the plan; nor can any unforeseen incident, or unexpected conspiracy, occur to thwart the execu-

tion. He being the sole Sovereign, wisdom, and justice, and goodness may be looked for, because He is wise, and just, and good. Were He not the sole Sovereign, we could not predicate so much until we knew what kind of a power shared the government along with Him. Inasmuch, therefore, as the sovereignty of God means that He was moved by nothing foreign to Himself, it is true; inasmuch as it means that He casts loose from wisdom, justice, and goodness, and every fatherly, friendly affection, it is utterly false.

You may think these arguments hardly worth the while, but this idea of sovereignty against which they are directed is one which hath met me more frequently in religious society and religious books than any other; and wherever it exists it worketh upon the minds of worshippers the selfsame effects which the mastership of a self-willed man or a tyrannical ruler doth upon his servants or subjects. The laws answer in the State what the promises answer in religion; which laws are held in reverence. We know where to find the favour, and where to pass the displeasure of our rulers. But once let our rulers trample upon law and substitute their own unknown will, then what is the effect? Every good counsellor takes his leave, and every tool and instrument of power supplies his place; the autocrat becomes surrounded with slaves. because men of thought and manhood cannot put up with his whims and caprices; every free and erect spirit is banished or taken off by force, and the stage is left clear for creatures who can tremble before the frown of a fellow-mortal, or pass into ecstasy before his smile. It is no otherwise with them who look upon the Godhead as not to be calculated on, but proceeding, nobody knows how, in its choice of men and the bestowal of favours. Therefore ensues a like banishment of the high and noble-minded, a like attraction of the timorous and slavish. And I do believe that at this day many stand aloof from making the experiment of a religious life because they believe, and believe rightly, that without heavenly help they shall have no success, but deem, and deem falsely, that this help no man can calculate on, but every man must wait for. Calculate on!—it may as surely be calculated on as God hath promised it.

Go unto the promises, which are the records of His will, and see if they do not contain in them grace and tenderness and love; shew us one which is not constructed so as to attract our affections and secure our interests. Are not these promises intended to beget expectation? Are they not intended to move men into certain courses in which alone they are to be reaped? They would be useless, and worse than useless, if God did not walk by them. The people who worship under this idea of sovereignty are paralysed in mind,—they dare not think a free thought,—their bosom is the sepulchre of their feelings, and their words hardly rise above their breath. They are ever blaming themselves, and offering God adulation. Oh! it is the death of a noble mind,—it blasts all its aspirations, and frowns on all its liberal thoughts,—it makes God's worshippers, the worshippers of the great and glorious God, a herd of fawning, crouching slaves, who, in order to do Him service, have cut off every noble and generous quality which could have fitted them for His service. Religion to such hath no life nor spirit of joy. They become dull and morose, gloomy and sequestered, and a chill, chill atmosphere of habitual fear oppresses the faculties of their soul.

There are two other common errors by which the worship of men is degraded: the one, that they purchase God's favours by their worshipful acts; the other, that God is on their side, and that they may take all liberties with Him. These we cannot enter into at present.

To be delivered from these and every source of error in your worship, there is no other resource but to devote yourself to the study of God, and to obtain right conceptions of His nature, for these conceptions determine our worship, just as our conception of a man's character determines our behaviour to him. This is best discovered in His Word and in the person of Christ; and of His Word, the promises are the most fruitful in the revelation of His character. They are also the most interesting to us, and therefore they ought to be carefully studied. Nothing indeed will give the mind confidence in God but through the study of Christ, His likeness, and through the knowledge of His

designs and purposes towards men. And we are bold to affirm, that until men do really study Christ as the image of the invisible God, and take the promises as the sure and steady rule of His government, they will remain afar off, overwhelmed with the idea of His stupendous power and their own insignificance. You need not to be informed that worship is nothing until the heart engage in it; whether it lies in imagination, or in knowledge, or in eloquent language, it is nothing. Worship is the devotion of all our powers to Him who gave them; it is the resignation of all our means to Him who furnishes them, the dedication of all our goods to the wise ends for which He gave them, and the surrender of all our liberated nature to Him who redeems us. In this sense, the Psalmist, after calling upon the angels that excel in strength, and the glorious hosts, and His works in all parts of His dominions, calls upon his own soul to worship Him. Arise, then, Christian brethren, to worship Him in your courses, by the graces of a charitable spirit and the aspirations of a devotional spirit, by the affections of a tender heart and the utterances of a thankful heart, by the duties and contentment and bountifulness of a godly life.

Nothing less than this will pass for worship under our present dispensation. It is not now first-fruits, but it is the whole heart, and soul, and strength, and might, that must be laid upon the altar of God. There is now no temple but the temple of the human heart,—no symbol of the Holy One but the spacious universe, the written Word, and the person of Christ. It is perished with the ritual, and it is perished with the sacrifice. The ministry is now a ministry of repentance and love and new obedience. Therefore, however regular your attendance in this and other places, however long and frequent your prayers, it mattereth not, unless your heart hath been won from its follies and made fruitful of wisdom and righteousness,— unless your eye hath been won from its lust and made joyful in the sight of God's wondrous works,—unless your hand hath become forgetful of mere worldly gain, and become devoted to all godly actions, and your whole life, denied to pride, hath become regenerate, from the least even to the greatest of its occupations.

V.

THE CHARACTER OF HIM TO WHOM WE PRAY.

MATT. VI. 5.

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

WE proposed to follow the Lord's own example, by taking into consideration the prejudices by the influence of which prayer is rendered an unmeaning or an offensive service. These are delivered in the context under two heads—those that originate with intention, and those that proceed out of ignorance or imperfect knowledge. Hypocrisy, ostentation, and other unworthy motives for prayer, which come under the first head rebuked by our Saviour, we have already treated of, and we are now exposing those which may arise from crude or erroneous conceptions of Him whom we worship. Now, that you may be sufficiently apprised of the importance of this subject, and the difficulty of forming the right conception of the Divine Being, we pray you to consider the difficulties of conveying to mortals any idea of things they have not seen, or of which they have not the resemblance within their reach. Suppose any of you, possessed of your present knowledge and refinement, were cast upon an ignorant and savage coast, little advanced in the arts of life, and that you wished to give them the benefit of your instruction. You would need, first of all, to learn their language, and speak of objects that are under their eye, and feelings with which they are familiar; in short, to descend to their measure and structure of thought, before you could raise them to yours. Suppose, for example, you wished to convey to them an idea of our king, you would have to make use of the word which, among them, signified

the chief man; and that moment you did so, they would transfer to our king those same powers and conditions which belong to the leading man among themselves. To correct this misapprehension, you would next have to give them an idea of the supremacy of law; but the moment you used their word for law, they would catch up a misapprehension of that term as great as of the former, taking it to be the same rude institution to which they conformed themselves. Every new word would carry with it a new misapprehension, and through a thousand such you would have to flounder your way to the truth; and after, it would only be a hallucination of truth, their notion of the thing being, in point of vividness, but as a shadow, and, in point of correctness, but as an outline of the truth. In this condition precisely does the Spirit of God find Himself when He would endeavour to convey to men an idea of God. There is no office upon earth, and consequently no name in the language of mortals, which will represent Him, and, therefore, many are adopted, as Sovereign, Lawgiver, Judge, Preserver, Father. If one of these would have answered, that would have been invariably used. Many are given, that each may supply its part in making up this most enlarged of all conceptions. The one operates as a check upon the other. To guard against the arbitrariness of Sovereign, there is the equity of Lawgiver; to guard against the sternness of both Sovereign and Lawgiver, there is the mercy of Saviour, and the affection of Father. Now, if you confine yourselves to any one of these similitudes, you will surely err, as the savage erred by not only transferring from the human conditions, which are not applicable to the Divine, but by leaving out conditions in the Divine nature, which that similitude does not represent, to which you confine yourself. Confine yourself to his terms, you have a greater chance to be correct, because then you can only take every quality in the one which is consistent with the other. By taking these, you make another approach both to accuracy and completeness. And so your idea both enlarges and corrects itself, according to the number of these terms or similitudes, which you embrace within the comprehension of your mind. Suppose, now, to continue our illustration, the sojourner amongst these un-

educated savages, perceiving his small success while he proceeded by verbal instruction in giving them ideas of the laws and customs and manners and arts of his native land, should turn himself to exemplify these,—should dress himself in his native costume, and construct his habitation, and cultivate his land, after the manner of his native home, and behave himself with the good breeding, and execute justice with the exactness, and worship God with the rites in which he had been instructed, it is manifest that he would now be in a fair way to teach the people, addressing them through sight and feeling, and sense of advantage, and every other avenue by which instruction can enter in. Now, in the exercise of the same wisdom, God, perceiving how ineffectual language was to represent His character, and how mortals were plunging from one extreme to another, according to their fondness for one or other of the similitudes which he had taken, adopted this same method of proceeding by example, and shewed, by a series of manners and actions and sufferings, the exact character which He wished to occupy in the minds of men. This He did by the incarnation of Christ, or the revelation of His image, without which no effectual advancement could ever have been made in teaching men to comprehend His nature. Jesus Christ presents the Divine character harmonised and exemplified, to which if men would bring their conceptions of the Almighty, they would be guarded from the mistakes into which language is constantly betraying them. In the life of Christ we can study the moral character of God, as an artist chisels beauty from a model, or from the life; and not more does an artist prefer models and living figures to verbal descriptions, than Christians should prefer studying the character of God from His express image, His manifestation in flesh, to studying it from verbal descriptions, which they can only harmonise by the greatest caution and effort of mind.

But instead of adopting this caution, and making use of this portraiture of Divinity, men do frequently cleave to some one similitude, and upon that construct an imagination of the Divine character most remote from the truth, and most detrimental to the whole cast and spirit of their worship. Into one of these extravagances we have already inquired,—

the conceiving of Him as all sovereignty; and we have shewn the most enslaving effects which it produces upon the whole tenor of the man, especially of free-born men, who hate instinctively, and by education, all sovereignty that hath not equity and goodness ever before its eye. The next prejudice upon the nature of God, and which is hardly less prevalent amongst good people, is, that He hath certain favourites amongst the human race. That a man is in favour with Him according to his worth and well-doing, and out of favour with Him according to his wickedness, is as certain as that He governs the world with equity, and will judge it in righteousness. At the same time, that there are great differences both in the moral and physical formation of men, and great differences likewise in their religious attainments, there can be no doubt; but it is a great mistake to refer these differences to God's partiality for one and His dislike of another. These different gradations of place and natural gifts are necessary for fulfilling the various offices of the world, as, to use St Paul's illustration, different vessels are necessary in a great house, and different members in the body of man; and therefore they are to be accounted not an act of partiality, but an act of wisdom, in order that the affairs of the world may go on and prosper. It would be partiality if God, after distributing His talents unequally amongst men, required as great return from those who had few as from those who had many; but when He hath declared, on the other hand, that of those to whom much is given much shall be required, and that a man shall be judged according to that he hath, and not according to that he hath not; it is, on the one hand, most envious, discontented, and unreasonable to complain,—on the other, most ungenerous and thoughtless to exult. What hast thou that thou hast not received, and for which thou shalt not be accountable? The highest-born and most highly-favoured man is not entitled to exult, because God, who made him to differ, will make him to account for that difference. Neither is the meanest-born and worst-conditioned entitled to complain, lest God take away his single talent, and confer it on the man with ten talents, against whose undue propor-

tion he murmured. Now, it is not otherwise in religion, where equal differences exist. I shall not take it upon me to explain, as being a question far beyond the compass of a discourse, how it happens that whole nations know not God, and of those that do, whole hosts neglect to acknowledge Him, and that there be but a few who cleave to His commandments; but while I pretend not to explain the difficulty, I will take upon me to resist every explanation which refers it to partiality and favouritism. Thus much I can perceive, that the progress of religion at home and abroad, and the progress of religion in every breast depends upon the use of human wisdom and human energy as much as the preservation of liberty, or the enlargement of fortune, or any other good thing under the sun. And while all men revolt from the idea that these natural things come by partiality in the Creator, they ought equally to revolt from the idea that religious things come of that partiality. I believe that God has given us not only the best scheme of religion, but the fittest for propagation that could be given; and I attribute its imperfect propagation at home and abroad not to any letting or hindering on His part, but to base neglect and shameless prostitution of the means which He hath revealed for its propagation. But waving these questions of how things might be, and taking things as they are, it is vain and delusory, nay, it is self-conceited and blasphemous, in any one to attribute his religious condition to an act of favouritism. It is an act of grace, but it is not an act of favouritism. An act of favouritism lies in exalting us at the expense of another, or over the head of another, who hath laboured as well for the prize. An act of grace lies in having exalted us at all. An act of favouritism would cease if all were equally exalted. An act of grace would only be made the greater. An act of favouritism reflects upon others. An act of grace does not. An act of favouritism springs from weakness, and engenders vanity; an act of grace springs from goodness, and engenders gratitude. While, therefore, every one gives God the glory of all his religious exaltation, he should be careful lest he sully the Divine character with weakness, or gather upon himself the airs and conceits of a

favourite, and affect towards others the tone and manner of a superior. For every other to whom Christ hath been preached, by the use of the same means might have obtained from God the same grace, and therefore they are to be argued and remonstrated with, not superciliously treated. And by having reached that superior station, a man is not, as it were, set free to range in larger liberty, or licentiousness of feeling, but to enjoy more strength and opportunity, that he may devote it to the more holy avocations. Paul, upon whose words this measure of God's grace is commonly rested, was never found calculating upon his high place in the Divine favour; and when, in self-defence, he was called upon to open up the grace that had been shewn to him, though it was in self-defence, and to establish his Divine commission, he three times calls himself a fool for his pains, and craves indulgence for doing what he considered to be the part of folly; not that I object to the use of such expressions as Scripture sanctions,—chosen of God, elect of God, people of God, holy nation, and royal priesthood,—but that I will not allow them to strangle the life of other parts of Scripture, or mar the proportions of the Divine character. It is thus, as we said at the beginning, that the imperfection of language hampers the Spirit of God, and that men pitch in each other's teeth passages of Scripture which it is their part to reconcile, not to set at variance. There are not two names of God which one might not find inconsistent with each other in a thousand things, as Sovereign and Father, Judge and Saviour, and so of any act or faculty ascribed to Him. The reason of which we have already explained. But give your study, as we advised, to the living model of Godhead, Jesus Christ. Did He turn aside from the wicked, or instruct His disciples to do so? Did He separate and divide Judea into two parts, the chosen and the reprobate, loving the one, abjuring the other; keeping company with the one, abstaining from the other? He did not so; but there were those who did so—viz., the Pharisees, against whose policy and principles He directed a thousand weapons, and guarded all His followers; but, for Himself, He kept with publicans and sinners, He spoke gently to the down-trodden, He took the part of the

proscribed, He washed the feet of the meanest, and put forth His grace and power for the salvation of all. Now, He is my pattern of the Godhead; and until they will reconcile these notions of favouritism in God with His conduct, I hold them vain and idle as the empty chaff; and until they reconcile their parting the population asunder, and allocating the saints from the sinners, their cleaving to the one, and their forsaking the Ishmaelite tents of the other,—reconcile this with the practice of Christ, I hold it ungodly and unchristian.

This notion of being God's favourites, against which we argue, when it obtains a seat in the mind, works the most baleful effects on every side. Towards God it places us in a most unbecoming familiarity. We fancy Him to be all on our side—that He has fairly taken us up and will carry us through; we identify our crudest conceptions with infallible inspirations of His Holy Spirit; we join ourselves to those who are, in like manner, initiated into the Divine mysteries. A school is formed, a sisterhood, or brotherhood of devotees, not a church of the living God. Everything held therein is right,—everything else is wrong,—we are the people, the people of God. And for the rest, they must be held as heathen men and publicans until they can adopt our discipline in whole and in detail. They are looked upon as people in whom God is not interested, nay, as a people for whom the Saviour has not died, whose prayers are an abomination to the Lord. This idea is the very seed-bed of persecution, which springs seldom from bloodthirstiness, sometimes from a love of power, but far more frequently from the idea that we are doing God's service. Our cause is thought to be God's cause, and the end being always presumed holy, the means are less rigorously inspected. Now, though the age has abhorred and abolished persecution for conscience' sake,—that is, violent forcible measures,—it consists with my observation that there exists a spirit of exclusion and suspicion towards all who do not think exactly alike with the leaders of the religious world; which spirit is, to all intents and purposes, the same as persecution,—is, in truth, persecution carried as far as the age will allow it. The root of the evil is in supposing that we hold our opinions by a direct patent from God, and

can by no means be wrong in any particular. Our scheme of doctrine and of duty, our scheme of religious sentiment and practice, is the approved infallible one, which we never dream of being wrong any more than we dream of any other being right. Now, what difference is there in being so held to the infallibility of a fraternity, or to the infallibility of one man? None that I can discern.

These delineations are within bounds, being taken from truth, not from idea, and aiming to represent the general effect, not the extreme instances. For if, in exposing this monstrous sentiment of God's favouritism, our object were to produce effect, we would set about it in another style. We would shew you all the persecutions of the Roman Church springing from the notion that they were infallibly right, the heretics infallibly wrong; that they were God's ancient people, the heretics novices taken in the snare of the devil. We would shew you the same sentiment, so disguising the nature of the most enlightened Protestants, as that they should ascribe to God the rejecting and reprobating from all eternity, and so forestalling unalterably the cruel fate of the great body of mankind. We could shew you them eloquently discoursing on the unconscious babes that never saw the light being conveyed to hell, with a thousand other monstrous sentiments which it harrows up human feelings to repeat. And, in this day, we could point to many who plume themselves upon being God's small remnant, reckoning with Elijah that they are left alone. And should God vouchsafe to them a revelation, as He did to the Tishbite, they would be wofully afflicted to find how many thousands of those communions they level against have not bowed the knee to Baal.

This self-delusion and self-adulation shelter under the wing of God's free grace. Thus to have picked them out, and advanced them, and adopted them into favour, they call a free, unbought act of grace. And so it is, doubtless; but first let me ask if the same call which came to them, cometh not to all of us,—if the same offer of free grace, made to them, is not made to all of us? Does it make the grace less free, that it is free to all? Does it make their obligation the less, that others have been entreated, but have not accepted? What

mischief under heaven is done to God or man, by taking the drift of Scripture, and offering the gospel as the message of glad-tidings to all mankind? What benefit under heaven is done to God or man by putting a construction upon the Scripture, by hampering it with theory, and obscuring God's fatherly nature with a mask, and taking away the wish on His part, the power on our part, the intention on the part of Scripture, that all should come to the knowledge of the truth? Let me ask, in the next place, to what they are called? Is it to closeness of heart, or to charity of heart? Is it to bowels of hatred, or to bowels of compassion? Is it to harshness, or to tenderness towards the rest of men? What, then, meaneth their distance, their seclusion, their frozen-heartedness to the world? Surely the world is not worse in these parts than it was in Judea when Christ knew it! Surely it is not worse than in Rome and Greece, when the apostles went first to Christianise it! Surely it is not worse than these heathen regions which our missionaries go to heal in the strength of the Lord!

This baneful prejudice of favouritism generally goes along with that of sovereignty, which we in our last discourse exposed. One who proceeds by blind will, puts forth the gentle parts of his nature which still survive, in acts of favouritism. For favouritism is an act of will, no less than cruelty. The one is reward put forth without desert; the other is punishment put forth without a cause. Now, truly, if God cannot consistently with His nature look out for objects worthy of His favour, and other objects deserving of His disfavour, He is not a fit Governor for the nature of man, which abhors more than death to be maltreated without occasion, and which is corrupted into every base and vicious form by having favours heaped upon it without regard to its deserving. If you would degrade a man to the very uttermost, make him the slave of a tyrant, or a tyrant's favourite. In the one case he sinks into the lowest ebb of humanity,—cunning, treacherous, vile and menial; in the other case, he adds to these, mock-majesty, late-sprung greatness, mockery of the dust from which he hath been exalted, weakness, silliness, often the panderism of every vice, and the ministry of every vanity. Oh, if God is

to be translated into such a Ruler, I crave exemption for myself, and must be fain to put up without His government. But perish the thought! be spurned for ever the horrid thought! It never lived but in souls base-born and base-bred, who would have licked the dust for the favour of princes, and been content to be trodden on by a royal foot. Religion is an awful thing; and I believe it to be a most ennobling thing, for want of which the finest natural faculties suffer shipwreck; but awful though it be, it is intelligible, and the way in which it ennobles can surely be laid down. If this be the way, then it is strange nobility, and I will endue it not.

But it is *not* the way by which it ennobles; neither is there any such secrecy, nor inscrutable mystery in the awarding of its favours and penalties. It is man's timidity, it is the slavishness of man, which thus makes religion to be abashed and blush before the noble-minded of human nature. The idea of God's power is so overwhelming, that unless it be counteracted in some way or other, it entirely incapacitates the mind from exercising its faculties upon the subject at all. Therefore He gave counteraction, both in nature and in grace, by prescribing to Himself certain modes of procedure, and revealing them to us. He made, as it were, a voluntary contract with His creatures, that thus and thus they would find Him going on. Not that He disguised aught of His will, but that He disclosed it. His rule in nature is called the laws in nature; and we believe there are laws of grace as determinate, and as seldom flinched from,—flinched from on occasions, as in Paul's case, where it was needful even to suspend nature's rules also. Now, if these rules given in Scripture be abolished, and things referred to sovereign will and favouritism, are we not where we were, without a guide? If you say the Spirit of God works by unknown, inscrutable methods, according to what seemeth good at the time, picking and choosing, then your Bible is not worth the turning over, any more than Kepler or Newton, or the calculations founded thereon, would be worth the consulting, if the heavens and the earth should forget their wonted courses, and wander forth into all the varieties of a wild, irregular, lawlessness. The Bible is as good as done up by these short-visioned zealots; for the Bible has no use but

to tell us how things to come are to be secured by present means. And if there is no connexion between present means and future things, what serveth it? Not a little, I say! To be withheld by an excessive fear, or by a conviction of incapacity, from going into the laws which govern our sanctification, is all the same as if it were locked up in an unknown tongue, and defended from the access of the people by laws and force of arms, as it was locked up to our fathers. Now, if we go into the Bible to discover God's will upon this matter, we find these delusions scatter like the exhalations of the unhealthy marsh before the fresh breeze of heaven. It is there set forth in ten thousand forms that those that seek Him shall find Him: those that ask of Him shall receive of Him; and to those that knock it shall be opened. His grace is to all and upon all that believe; His loving-kindness is to the ends of the earth; and the people are greatly blessed who receive the glorious sound of His salvation.

Let the spirit of every one, therefore, be reassured; let no cloud obscure the gracious countenance of God. It is not with your persons, but with your wickedness, He is angry; and your wickedness being put away, His favour will encompass you like a shield. Expect not to be heard of Him out of partiality, for He regardeth no man's person; neither fear to be rejected out of rooted dislike, for He wisheth all men to repent, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. His face is set against the workers of iniquity, utterly to subvert them. His favour is with the just, and His ear is open to their cry. Why did He refuse the appointed fasts—the feasts, the blood of bulls and of he-goats, incense, and a sweet-smelling savour? Because their hands were full of blood. Saith the prophet, "Put away the evil of your doings; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

So account of God, therefore, as of a merciful Saviour and a helpful Father, whose doors are never barred against the returning prodigal; who sendeth messengers into all countries for his return; who hath prepared every welcome and rejoicing for his reception; and who, when he returneth, will entertain him with the fattest of His house, that he may have no more temptation to stray from his native home.

VI.

THE MISAPPREHENSION OF GOD'S GRACE.

ROM. VIII. 28–39.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose, &c. &c.

WE feel it expedient to diverge again from the course of our general subject in order to explain ourselves more exactly upon the matter of our last discourse, which exposed the danger of applying the notion of partiality to God, and of being favourites to ourselves. In our desire to open the door of divine grace wide as the wants and sinfulness of men, we may have happened to disturb the well-grounded confidence of those who have already entered into acceptance with God, and become sealed in His favour; not that there was anything said to offend the trust of the most advanced Christian, but because there is a vile profitless controversy upon the subjects of election and perseverance, which hath predisposed the mind of man to be irritable on anything which looks in that direction; and though we hold the controversy cheap and profitless, yet, that no one of our charge may suffer, but profit by what we say, we judge it right now to discourse a little upon the confidence and security which those that have walked with God are not only permitted but commanded to entertain. We laid before you last Lord's day the equal favour which God had for you all,—the equal richness of provision which He had made in the gospel of His blessed Son for every one to whose ears the gladsome sound of it should arrive,—that the preaching to you Christ and Him crucified is a *bonâ fide* transaction on the part of God—not a feint or fraud, but a sincere offer of that which you need, which He presents, and which you are at liberty to possess without

price. The onus of refusing lies upon us, not upon the Giver. This broad banner of the gospel, having written on it, "Free to all, without money and without price," no argument of the metaphysician or theologian shall ever beguile out of our hands. Should they even make propositions like Euclid's own, concluding that God neither intended nor offered the salvation of Christ to all, but only to a few, and that for the rest it went wide of the mark, and could by no possibility come near them at all, I would not adopt these propositions even though I could not detect their fallacy; because it is more likely they should contain error which I cannot detect, than that God's Word should be untrue, of which it is the drift that the gospel should be preached unto all the ends of the earth, and to those that are afar off upon the sea. This free offer and power of acceptance we will never give up; and, on the other hand, we will as little give up those passages of Scripture which, like our text, speak with special affection to the accepted people of God. We shall suppose that a number of you, beloved brethren, perceiving the freeness and largeness of this offer of mercy to pardon and grace to help, should humbly believe, and accept the great goodness of the Lord, and set forward the good work of faith and repentance; and we will shew by what process there will come to be engendered in your minds such new feelings as will make you peruse with heartfelt gladness those very passages of Scripture touching election and perseverance which now are so frightful, insomuch that you will adopt, as most excellent and wholesome food to your spirit, that which formerly you loathed as the food only of trouble and despair. In which task, if I succeed, I shall consider myself as having done more excellent service to your understanding of the Scripture, and promotion in the grace of God, than if I had waged war against the Arminian heresy for a thousand years. Suppose, then, that having perceived every obstacle and barrier removed out of the way by the work of the Saviour, and beholding in Him the reconciled countenance of God, you take heart, and, no longer fearing because of sins unpardoned, but rejoicing in sins forgiven, draw near to the Word of God, as Moses did to the bush, in order to examine

it more closely; and there you find a light unto your feet, and a lamp unto your path; and many bright promises, like prizes, scattered along the way—promises of help in weariness, of deliverance in trial, of consolation in trouble, of mastery over sin, and progress in the work of sanctification. You find promises for your families of the providence of God, promises for the past of indemnity, promises for the present of love and union, promises for the future of everlasting glory. Taking these in good earnest, as meant for you no less than for the rest of the children, you take courage, and advance onward in that way which is so plentifully blessed with the promises of the Divine Saviour. You endeavour to keep your heart, out of which are the issues of life, watching its motions towards envy, covetousness, malice, and all evil affections; you put a watch upon your lips, that you offend not God, speaking of things with gravity, sincerity, and truth, abstaining from levity of speech and foolish jesting, which are not convenient; you go down into your several walks of business, setting the Lord continually before your eye, doing righteousness and executing justice between yourself and your neighbour, watching your talents to improve them, and in all things doing the office of a faithful and judicious steward; also, you set your house in order, according to the Lord's commandment unto a parent and a master, loving your children, rebuking them in wisdom, and correcting them in love, and opening up before them the way to honour, and immortality, and life; and you adopt over your servants a kind and gracious rule, giving them a share in your prayers and religious exercises. Through all these, and every other department of your occupation, you endeavour to introduce the regulation of wisdom, and temperance, and piety; endeavouring to guide your affairs with discretion unto the end. Meanwhile are not forgotten the duties of the sanctuary, the duties of the closet, the duties of almsgiving, the duties of society, and the duties to the brethren, the common members of Christ. This thorough radical reformation of the life and character you hopefully enter upon, looking to the commandment of God, and trusting in the promises of God, which are sufficient for their performance. You enter upon

it full of gladness, because, after so many years of folly and wickedness, the power of retrieving your reputation with God, and redeeming the future, hath been put within your reach by the judgment of Christ. You enter upon it with the more zeal that you have been such profitless servants hitherto, and with the resolution that, through God's grace, you will make amends to the world for your long sinfulness, and shew forth at length, to angels and to men, your estimation of that Saviour upon whom you have trampled so long and so profanely.

Here let us pause a moment and consider what it is you have undertaken, and what is likely to be the result. You have opened, if I may so speak, the largest, broadest negotiation with God, upon the faith of documents written by His hand, and sent by special messengers to the sphere which we inhabit. You have gone into an intercourse, not of commodities, but of feelings and affections, of hopes and desires, grounded upon the promises held forth in His Word, and in anticipation of the return of providence, and peace, and happiness, and improvement which these promises hold out. A great deal have you staked upon the issue, and in the strength of faith you have staked it all,—left off your sins, forfeited your false gains, changed your manners and your principles, and commenced a new style of conducting yourself, to the end of reaping a manifold reward. Now, consider this matter like business-doing men. One cannot go into large transactions with any person without soon having cause either to rejoice or to repent. If the anticipated advantage be realised even beyond anticipation, faith is strengthened, and confidence secured, and the grounds of a close intercourse are laid. If our expectations are disappointed, and nothing is realised but broken promises, frustrated hopes, and unfair transactions, then we are covered with indignation, and dissolve further dealings with him who has so wantonly betrayed us. We cannot help ourselves in this matter, so as to hinder confidence and assurance from arising in our minds, and strengthening in proportion by our experience of trustworthiness. We willingly yield ourselves to such sweet and natural affection; and would trust a thousand lives upon a friend who hath stood fast to our side, or

to a wife who hath been as confidential as our own bosom, or to a brother who hath stood true to us, or to a man of business who hath never broken faith, nor failed to fulfil the letter of his contract. The man who yields not his confidence on such occasions is indeed much to be pitied: he indicates a suspicious turn which must trouble his peace, a jealousy which must ever sicken his love, a caution which must ever hamper his transactions, and a closeness within which no bud of affection will expand itself, until he alters his nature. He is cut off from the regions of happy enjoyment, and doomed within the secrecies of his own selfishness to dwell,—when he comes forth, to be treated with the reserve and coldness with which he treats others, and to banish innocent, affectionate people from his company, as being uncongenial to their enjoyment.

Now, brethren, the weight of our argument is over, and needs only to be applied to the case in hand. Having reposed in God such a deal of trust, and made at His desire such a multitude of arrangements as were mentioned above, committing ourselves before the eyes of men, and breaking with the world in many of these fond and cherished customs, things must speedily come to issue between our souls and God, and they must either realise their expectations, or they must not. The matter must immediately come to discussion. If the fruits do accrue, and the peace of mind draws on, and light springs up within the soul,—if sinfulness cometh to lose, and holiness to take a hold,—if our affections come to sweeten, and irritations to die away,—if the world no longer drives us at its will, but we can make head against it and overcome it,—if our families grow into good order and affection through the economy newly introduced,—and serenity, like the canopy of peaceful night, closes in our days,—and conscious joy, soft as the dawn of morning, awakens us to life and activity again,—and all the day long we move abroad in contentment, and invested with a new strength, which enables us to stand for things that are honest, and true, and lovely, and of good report;—if, moreover, we see a Providence watching over our estate, and never bringing us to loss but for our good, so that in what-

ever condition we are we feel content;—moreover, if within our breast there is a strong and lion heart after the right and godly of human affairs,—a trampling, restless scorn of the base and mean,—a moving pity of the wretched and miserable,—a hatred of the wicked and ungodly;—if, in short, those fruits of the Spirit, which are the present rewards of the promises, do reveal and manifest themselves before our sight, so that we cannot be self-deceived, but are truly become partakers with the children of God,—then, men and brethren, do you not perceive that towards God, who hath been so true to His engagements, who hath shewn us the road out of such troubled waters, and brought us unto such fresh and peaceful pastures, we must feel, we cannot help ourselves from feeling, not only the utmost gratitude, but the utmost confidence and assurance, for the things that are expected in the time to come? He hath accomplished His covenant; we have tasted His rewards, and they are good. They are incorporated in our soul, secured in our inward parts, a part of our life, an element of our indivisible thought, ours inalienable by any human power. O my brethren, can any one who hath lived degraded by abominable customs, or torn and rent within his soul by a thousand contending thoughts, like vapour, and smoke, and raging winds within the bowels of combustible Etna, and thence been brought to the erectness of a holy man, enjoying a calm contentment within, and beholding without, a wise, though mysterious providence of God,—can it be that this same man, so delivered beyond power of any earthly emancipation, should not delight himself and trust in the Lord Jehovah, who hath done such wondrous things for his soul?

It is not possible, for there accompanies every improvement of the soul an inward joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. A man may grow in wealth, and be thankless to his benefactors; or in power, and spurn from his foot the ladder of friends by which he rose; or he may grow in knowledge, and afterwards despise his masters. But these are because of the bad parts of human nature predominant over the good; of which predominance of the bad this improve-

ment we discourse of is the very death-blow and prevention, for it is the destruction of the bad and the exaltation of the good. The improvement itself is the best security that such improvement will be acknowledged at the proper source, for it consists in the extirpation of selfishness, and blindness, and ingratitude, which might have hindered us from acknowledging the gift to the Giver. Therefore, both because of the stability of God to His engagements, because of the good things we possess that cannot be taken from us, because of the improved perceptions and feelings of our minds, it must happen that towards God, from whom it all hath come plentifully down, there must arise within our breasts the greatest confidence, and trust, and assurance for the time to come.

Thus it appears that it is as much (it could be shewn that it is far more, but this is enough for the present) of the nature of religion to beget trust and confidence in God, as of friendship, or love, or commerce to beget trust in those withwhom we interchange interest and affection; and it argues, no less in the one than in the others, a jealous, suspicious spirit, when this feeling is not generated, and does not go on increasing with the number and extent of our transactions. And should such jealousy and suspicion have previously existed in the mind of one who enters upon religious intercourse with the Word of God, this obnoxious feature of his character will be pointed out to him amongst others, and he will be encouraged, nay, obligated, to address himself to its correction; so that in every case where a man's religion is of the genuine kind described above,—viz., the making of sacrifices at the command of God and upon the promises of God, —it must necessarily happen that as God is faithful to His promises, he must grow in confidence according to the number of promises in the strength of which we adventure, and with the fruits of which we are rewarded.

Having arrived at this conclusion, we are now ready to shew you how natural it is in God to utter, and how delicious to His people to hear, those expressions of their election and perseverance which have wrought such dismay in many breasts. If you write to a dear friend, you subscribe yourself

"his till death;" you call him the "friend of your choice," for whose sake you could "lay down life itself," and that "nothing shall divide you from his love but the grave;" that distance only strengthens your attachment, and misfortunes do but reveal the value of his friendship. Again, between husband and wife, which of all other relations is perhaps the most confidential, after the relation of the religious soul to God,—in that relation there springs up, when it is joined by true affection, such a degree of trust and confidence as no common language can express: all the language of choice and constancy which God employs towards His people, and much more, does not suffice to represent it. Even servant and master sometimes join an affection hardly less strong in its kind, which, though it does not utter itself in the language of equality, utters itself by the fact that nothing can part them. In all these affectionate unions, when death comes, the survivor mourns that he was not taken. I could bring forward a great many other instances if you would not think me fanciful; but, alas! it is not my fancy which exaggerates, but our misfortune to dwell in the midst of the artificial life of cities, where interest plays deeper in the game than affection, —where advantage too often joins marriage, and convenience friendship,—where show and fashion is the soul of social life, —where all things have in them a portion of the counterfeit as well as of the real, of the artificial as well as of the natural; so that nothing becomes so difficult as to think or feel according to nature, nothing seems so ridiculous as to speak according to what you feel, and the whole work of affection is marred and suspected. But I speak not of such; I speak of the strength of pure affection—what one soul is capable of feeling and saying to another soul with whose true feelings it hath been long acquainted.

Now God's affection longeth to utter itself in the same terms of dear and precious language towards those who have joined themselves to Him, and deserted for His sake all the pleasures of sin. He calls them His chosen people, His beloved children, whom He shall keep by His Spirit until the day of redemption; and Christ calls them His friends, whom He loveth more than doth an elder brother—His spouse, in whom He

beholds neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. God and Christ promise to dwell with us,—to become our shield, our buckler, and our high tower. Though ten thousand fall at our side, it shall not once come near to us. Because we have trusted in the great name of the Lord, He will deliver us in the day of trouble. Nothing shall separate us from His love,—neither height nor depth, nor things present nor things to come. This is the language of God's affection towards those who have come and seen that He is good. And while it is natural for God to utter, it is delightful for those who have become acquainted with His faithfulness to hear, such language from His mouth. It is the natural food of that confidence and love which have grown between them through the experience which they have had of each other. God hath beheld the sacrifices which His servants have made; His servants feel the benefits which He hath conferred upon them: they are embraced by the memory of a thousand acts of mutual trust, and they hunger for expression of that happy communion into which they have been brought.

Those parts of Scripture, therefore, which express the peculiar delight and attachment which God hath in His people above the rest of men—His having chosen them, His having sealed them, His preserving them in safety, His keeping them unto the end—can no more be spared from Scripture than those which express the largeness, the freeness, the universality of His love. His nature would be incomplete without both; and our nature would be unsatisfied if either the one or the other were cut off. If you were to remove the largeness and universality of His love, then you strike a blow at the root of religion,—you cut off the very commencement of affection between the soul and God,—you shut the door and lock it, and write above it that it is impassable. If, again, you exclude those expressions of interior fondness and love, of peculiar attachment, of finished friendship, of completed confidence, of assured repose,—you hinder the progression of attachment, you cut off the increase of affection, and do away all argument to advance onwards into the heart of the Almighty's tabernacle. Then might it well be said, it is all common general expressions of love, but when one comes to try, it

roots not, it grows not, it ripens not,—we come no nearer, we are still amongst the crowd. It is all invitation, but no feast.

But while neither can be spared, both can be retained; and why not retain both, seeing both are written in the Scripture, and both necessary for the satisfaction of human nature? They do not interfere or war against each other, but are equally suited to people in different circumstances—those setting out, and those advanced; equally suited to every believer in different circumstances—when beginning to hold intercourse with God, and after having proved the faithfulness and goodness of His word. It is Godlike to make free overtures to all the family, and it is also Godlike to notice those who accept these overtures, and attach themselves to His interest, from those who do not. In the family it becomes a father to feel a common favour for all; but to make a distinction, and a great distinction too, between those that cleave to his love, and those that arm their hand or their tongue against him,—it may cost him much to cast any off, as it cost the old British king much, and wrung his heart-strings sore, to forswear his two eldest daughters. And, oh, how much doth it cost God to cast any one of us off!—what pains to conciliate us all, when He gave His only-begotten and dearly-beloved Son to reconcile us to Himself! But it were weakness in any father—weak, blind affection, mere dotage—not to be able to sit upon a seat of authority and utter commandments against a rebellious child; while at the same time he took an obedient child affectionately to his bosom, and breathed over him the softest, sweetest accents of affection.

Thus, brethren, we have justified the wisdom of Scripture, the fulness of the Divine character, and the suitableness of both to act agreeably upon human nature. We have abstained from all controversy, which we are resolved ever to do. We will lift up the narrow limits of popular theology, and take our scriptural liberty; we will remove stumblingblocks in the way of your entering into the peace and love of God; but we will neither say nor gainsay with any of the theological factions which divide the land. Our part is to interpret the good Word of God, and shew what use it is of to the happiness of your spirits, to the welfare of your lives, present and

to come. This we have endeavoured to do, according to our ability, in the foregoing plain discourse.

If any one would have us to advance further, and discourse of the decree from all eternity, and of the secret counsels of God, we beg to decline, as totally incompetent to the task. It is sufficient for us to deal with things revealed; all other speculations we hold as most culpable curiosity. It is a repetition of Adam's sin—partaking of the forbidden tree; God having forbidden all approach to Himself, save by the way revealed: "I am the way; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Enough of mischief has come to the Church from those daring inquiries to deter me, if I were not already deterred by my inability to the task. Further curiosity must sleep until the revelation of all things: only it is pleasant to see how the spirit of a believer, from dwelling at first upon the generality of the offer and freeness of the gift, comes at length to dwell upon the expressions of special love and special security, which shews that he hath advanced many stages on his journey. Let us therefore conclude by praying you all, in order to realise the same enjoyment, to make that experiment of a religious life which we described at the beginning. Encouraged by the door opened to forgiveness and favour by your Lord and Saviour,—encouraged likewise by the ample promise of grace and strength presented to you by the Spirit of all grace and consolation,—undertake the trial of the commandments in thought and word and deed. Be not discouraged by the expressions which pervade the Scripture of special favour. You have to do with the expression of universal favour at the outset. This is the invitation to the feast—the other is the dessert with which it closes; if you look to the latter, the words of special love, look to them as yours in prospect—as the young soldier does to the triumph of his general, or as the young statesmen does to the confidant of his sovereign. Let these expressions of special love be your encouragement to go forward till you have attained unto that inward court of favour. Every one who is there began where you began—upon the general invitations alone; and, according as he trafficked more and more with the Word of God, he rose more and more in favour with God. He felt it in the strength

of his faith, he felt it in the answer of prayer, he felt it in the sanctification of his soul, and the sunshine of contentment around him,—he sees it in the mercies gathered about his lot, —he reads it in all the experiences of his past life,—he knows it by the anticipation of future joys. These experiences change him into another attitude to God than when he first set out. He was then a beginner; he is now an advanced Christian. He fed then all on hope untried; he hath now hope fulfilled, and certainty of a thousand goods. He looks to Scripture for good suited to his altered condition of mind, to his closer place, and he finds it written in those passages of which it has been our object this day to justify and defend the use, without allowing them to devour, as they commonly are made to devour, the general and common expressions of the Divine love; which truly is as bad as to make the child devour the parent,—to make the future devour the present, by which alone that future can be reached,—hope to devour faith, which is all we possess of things hoped for.

VII.

THE MISAPPREHENSION OF GOD'S GRACE.

ROM. VIII. 28–39.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose, &c. &c.

IT is our intention to continue the digression of our last discourse, and enter more at large into the proper and improper application of such passages as that which hath been read. To this we are moved by a desire that the character of God may be freed from the impeachment of what is odious, and be presented as embracing every attribute which is calculated to impress veneration and affection upon the mind of man. For through the obtrusion of these passages upon the attention of unconverted men, to whom they have no application, it will come to pass, not only that the character of God for impartiality and universal good-will is blemished, but that the Scriptures themselves are violated and purloined of the precious treasures which they offer to the community at large; among whom there spreads, in consequence, a general dissatisfaction with sound doctrine, which more than anything else predisposes them to fall into the sickly and meagre arms of Unitarianism, or into the noisome embrace of the infidel school, which hath degenerated in these times into the nestling-place of everything unholy. Now, in undertaking this office of conveying to others the comfort which we have ourselves in meditating on the Christian's God, and perusing every part of His holy Word, we again protest against being misinterpreted as levelling at any opinionists whatever: yea, we are endeavouring, in deed and in truth, to do our feeble part for your edification and growth in grace; for we do feel that, unless we do our best to expound, and you your best to understand, and

both our best to put in practice, the good word of God, it is a mockery to ask His grace to help us, and His strength to be made perfect in our weakness. There is no humility in being idle and thoughtless because our actions are imperfect and our thoughts infirm, but there is humility to feel our weakness and perceive our limitations, after we have done our best to think and to act; and that is prayer which springs from a sense of the necessity of superior aid. If these inquiries were presumptuous sallies of unsanctified speculation, and not humble endeavours to find out the use and fruitfulness of the Word of God,—if they ended in disaffecting the mind towards God, or doing away with the work of our blessed Saviour, or making the offices of the Spirit vain, then we would desist for ever; because these are truths which in our heart we hold essential to godliness, and which we shall ever labour to defend. Therefore be not afraid, as if we went about to unsettle any good or wholesome truth, but rest assured that we humbly endeavour to explain these truths to the thinking, inquiring men with whom we are surrounded.

The merit of preserving in their purity and simplicity those passages which speak the sentiments of our text is due to the Calvinists, who are wont to be held in such abhorrence in certain places; and had they done nothing more, they are worthy of everlasting gratitude from the Christian Church. All men can read in the gospel the freedom of its overtures, which it is the utmost solecism for a moment to doubt. God never hath given, never can give, a boon which is not to the world generally. That it should not come all at once to the knowledge of all, or be accepted of all to whose knowledge it hath come, we shall take another opportunity of examining at large, and justifying from the envious but ignorant attacks of fanciful and weak-minded men who would screen their own guilt and quiet their own misgivings, by alleging the many who know not, and the many who knowing, like themselves, reject the gospel. But that it should be free for those to whom it comes to accept it, and that if they reject it, they do so at peril and loss, as they would if they rejected liberty, or knowledge, or power, or any beneficial blessings placed within their reach,—this is a point which stands so legibly out, that no-

thing but the uttermost stupidity, or the most blinded opinionativeness can make a man miss finding it in every page of Scripture; and therefore there was no merit nor resolution in upholding those parts of Scripture which make free overture of the blessings unto all. But it was a more difficult and more invidious part, and required more boldness, to come forth with those other parts of Scripture which speak the language of particular and special favour towards those who believe over those who do not believe. This was at once to constitute a difference, to make a separation of actual privileges, between those who were of the Church and those who were not, and it could not fail to draw down odium from the world upon those who uphold it. The Calvinists did not flinch from this odium, but upheld the special grace of God to His people. They brought out from the shade into which they are cast by others those parts of Scripture which uphold what they call the covenant of grace and its privileges; and in doing so, they did most capital service to religion. For, as we shewed in our last discourse, religion would cease to be progressive, like every other thing which human nature handleth, if we could jump at once into its very centre of light, liberty, and enjoyment. There must be something to stimulate industry and encourage perseverance, something to reward activity of thought and steadiness of purpose, in order that it may be suited to the nature of men. Observe that of every dispensation of providence, the good parts come in degree; the reward is progressive with, and proportionate to, the diligence and continuance of the labour. In knowledge, for example, the pleasure is prospective, and draws you on; in affection, we proceed by slow approaches, one parallel after another being mastered, until we are seated in the citadel of the heart; in obedience to a good master, we set out with difficulty, and get on by degrees, and at length come to love that which at first we hated as a task. In virtue also, taking it as independent of religion, the steep at first is hard to climb, but yields such balmy freshness and vital health at every step that we at length forget that we are ascending. Now, if religion be, as it is, a combination of knowledge, affection, and holy obedience, it should also, to suit human nature and

lure it on, have rewards proportionate to the advancement we make. Besides having liberty to set out, or rather strong pressing invitation proportionate to the first difficulty of the task, it ought to have constant experience of its advantage, and an increasing pleasantness and growing health to draw us onwards. These interior and more advanced rewards, these special revelations of God's Spirit to the believer, the Calvinists maintained under various names,—the grace and accomplishments of the new man, the peace and joy to which the natural man is a stranger, the mercies of the new covenant, and various other significant terms drawn from Scripture itself,—and in doing so they did most especial service to the cause, not only in speaking to the experience of those who were within the temple of grace, and upon whom all its reputation depended, but, I will maintain it, they did also most material service to those not initiated, by pointing out to their eyes the happy deliverances and enjoyments of those who had come and tasted that God is good. For it is a vain thing to go about inviting busy people to this or that, unless you set forth the entertainment which they shall have if they will accept the invitation. Even the porters who, with pole and ticket, station themselves in the streets, inviting the passengers to the entertainment of the evening, have set forth most legibly an account of the treat, and often a picture of it, to speak the more promptly and efficaciously to the passer by. So if the preacher of the gospel did but cry, "Come, ho, come, enter into this way opened up by Jesus Christ," he would make little impression upon the people posting with what diligence they can, each one after his proper business. He must cry out what he will give them to come, as Isaiah doth: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come, buy wine and milk without money and without price;" or, like Christ himself, he must set forth an entertainment worth the going to—the entertainment of a king, a banquet given by a king at the marriage of his son. Thus furnished, his messengers may expect much.

More highly, therefore, on every account are the Calvinists to be applauded for having held the tone of a special as well

as a general grace, of having preached to the people within the pale as chosen and secure, the redeemed and adopted sons of God, and having pointed out to them the evidences of their calling and election. In doing so, they did nothing but justice to the Scriptures, which, with all courtesy and invitation towards the world without, contain also praise and encouragement of the church within; with all forgiveness and reconciliation to sinners, contain assurance and rewards to saints. The Calvinists, besides preaching before the door of the temple to the unwilling crowd, went into the temple to serve the necessities and entertainment of those who had entered, and to those hesitating brought out particulars of the feast, and displayed them, to work upon their decision; and they ever and anon kept opening views into the temple, that all might see what great and gracious things they were heedlessly passing by. It was preaching such as this which reformed these two kingdoms and all the Protestant states of Europe; and into whatever preaching this doth not enter as a capital ingredient, that preaching will not speed. Such passages, therefore, as our text are not to be hid in a corner, but are to be oft and boldly brought forth as the only good which suits the enlarged affections and devoted confidence of the advanced people of God; and when they are so used for pasture to the sheep of the flock, and for encouragement to those without the fold, they are well and wisely used.

But I need not tell you, because it is known like the sun at noon, and openly avowed by the Calvinists themselves, that it hath happened to them to fancy that these passages of election and perseverance are the capital and main things to be offered to the unconverted world; whereas they are as unintelligible as midnight to such, and bear to them no grace and no encouragement. Had they been presented in prospect to allure them on, had the unregenerate been told the time was coming when they would be able to appropriate to themselves all these specialties and personalities of God's Word, they had acted wisely. But this, and this alone, hath engrossed them, until positively they have no overtures of pardon to all, no offers of grace to all, no compassion of a Saviour to all, no incitements of a Holy Spirit to all. The

people pass the temple gate, they hear the feasting and mirth within, but no voice that they also are welcome. Certain ministers stand at the gate describing, eulogising the high calling of those within, but no tidings to the people how they may approach; consequently the people take it as a mockery of them,—their desire is aggravated of the good thing, but no hope permitted of its ever being theirs, no thought indulged that they have as good a title as the best. This, this is the misuse of these passages when they eclipse the free light of salvation and seal the lips of the forerunners of grace. Now to perceive the fatal effects, and to find out the source of this weakness, we pray you to listen to the following illustration, which will explain how the high and pure minds of the Calvinistic divines, exercised as they have ever been with the perfections of spiritual life, have come to forget the steps by which they reached their exaltation both of faith and of practice.

If it should happen that a college or university of knowledge, celebrated for its learning, should, out of admiration of that they enjoy, be constantly setting forth their great blessing over ignorant and illiterate people; if the works they wrote should display the ultimate reaches of their science, the mysteries they had penetrated, which no uninitiated person was able to comprehend from want of similar education and learning; if, moreover, to replace their numbers, thinned by death, they chose youth and secreted them from the public, and privately tutored them until they had arrived at the same pitch of knowledge and imbibed the same spirit of exclusion with themselves; if, moreover, this college of learned men did positively prohibit and interdict all discourse from being holden with the multitude upon the way by which they came to their present happy state of knowledge, and all books from being written in any other style than that of profound and far advanced science, in short cast a mystery over the path by which they ascended, and a radiancy over the ascent itself,—what effect, I ask, would such an institution have in the bosom of any community? It would draw the wonder and admiration of the ignorant, who would gape and stare, and give it all into the hands of mystery and enchantment. But the thoughtful it would disgust; those of

gentle spirit, who might have been taught, it would overawe; those of bolder spirit, who would break the chain, it would persecute: in short, it would be a further evil to those uninitiated, whatever it might be to themselves. All the while there might be no deception in the matter,—they might be the learned men they set up to be,—they might have the delights accruing from their knowledge which they claim to have; only they had one defect, they thought more of their own happiness than the happiness of the many. They might be sincere in preferring the high rewards of their knowledge to the trouble of enlightening the ignorant and advancing the desirous; nay, they might be naturally brought into this condition from oversight, caused by this, that their devotion to this enjoyment and study overshadowed their benevolent interest in the common good. But it doth seldom happen that it proceeds from such defects in oversight alone, for there come to be added the many unholy influences of being admired, and wondered at, and revered, and giving the law, and being blindly served and awfully listened to, to all which human nature is incidental. But I need not speak by hypothesis or supposition, for every religion under the sun will supply me with examples. The ancient priests of Egypt shut up their knowledge in hieroglyphics, of which we are but now breaking the seal,—the ancient Greeks in fables,—the later Greeks in mysteries lesser and greater,—the Druids, our fathers, in dark verses, which they forbade to be written, and in depths of embowering woods. They do so in the East to this day. The Brahmins and Buddhists and Shamanists secrete the mysteries of their faith. There is not any religion but the Christian, and the Mohammedan, which is a base corruption of the Christian, that does expose to common perusal all its secrets. Even the Old Testament, by all the commandments of publicity, was not prevented from being shut up in the traditions of the scribes and Pharisees, who, according to the Saviour, held the key of knowledge, and entered not in themselves, neither permitted others to enter in. The Christian faith in the hands of the Catholics hath been liable to as gross a secretion, being shut up in an un-

known tongue, and spirited away into an infallible man,—a sort of Lama of Christendom.

When men, therefore, do actually possess any superior light or privilege over the great body of the people, it doth appear they are liable to appropriate it to themselves, and hinder it from being encroached upon by the vulgar. Now, as was shewn in our last discourse, the people who have joined themselves to God, through His blessed Son, do actually enjoy a new world of happy existence. Their affections are sweetened, their hopes enlarged, their confidence for eternity made sure, and their whole heart above measure rejoiced. They are at sea in no respect—settled and stablished, rooted and grounded, in the favour of God. They are protected from the chief evils of misfortune, and misrule, and wickedness. They know that their sins are forgiven, and their iniquities pardoned, and that there remaineth for them an everlasting rest. They have shed abroad in their hearts all the fruits of grace, and over their lives all the joy and satisfaction of holiness. They are a peculiar people, a chosen nation, a royal priesthood, to shew forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. In a remarkable degree, therefore, they stand liable to the weakness of human nature mentioned above—of forgetting the method of ingress into this elysium of the soul which God hath brought them to possess. And if I say they have fallen into it, let me do it with deference, and not be understood to bring a railing accusation, but to say that they are not perfect, but only men, though sanctified men: in truth, it is the excess of a good quality which hath made them incidental to the weakness. It is not the pleasure of keeping others in darkness, nor the desire of exclusive right, that hath made them cloud with mystery the passage out of nature into grace, instead of making all men acquainted with its plainness; it is the excessive reverence they have for the work of the Spirit, the excessive feeling of their own incompetency to explain His goings and comings, the excessive fear lest by entering into the means they took they should abstract from God, and take the glory

to themselves. I reverence, I most highly reverence, their motives, while I profoundly lament that they are so barren of counsel to the unconverted. I defend them from all imputation of premeditated secrecy or exclusive appropriation; while, at the same time, I have the hardihood to think and say they have acted injudiciously, and spread among those who do not know them well all the prejudices and dislikes which arise against a narrow-minded and exclusive corporation. The idea is widely spread among the worldly that the Calvinists have not liberality of heart, and that they shut the door of grace upon their brethren. They say, When we ask for help, you give us hopelessness; when we ask for instruction, you answer, that nothing can be done for us until God move in the matter, and that His motions are hid from our knowledge; you cast a veil over the Scriptures, alleging that without an inward light they cannot be understood; when we ask for guidance to the light, you give us vague and unintelligible mystery; we ask bread, you give us a stone; we are in weariness, but we find not from you that rest unto the soul which Christ himself promised to the weary and the heavy laden. Thus, most unfortunately, it comes to pass that, though there be amongst the followers of Christ none of the fraudulent designs which cause the secrecy in false religions or in narrow-minded incorporations of knowledge, the effects upon the unjudging world have become almost as prejudicial to the cause as if these fraudulent motives were stimulating this most unwarrantable and injudicious seclusion of the truth.

This unwise conduct of the Calvinists ariseth chiefly from the misuse of such passages as this before us, which they interpret by the head rather than by the heart. Now, you will remember how we shewed that these passages are the language of affection, due only to well-proved worth, and well-purchased favour. Now, affection hath a language of its own, which those not under its influence are apt not only to misunderstand, but to ridicule. Love is not logical, nor precise, but large and unbounded in its utterances. Its language is that of partiality and favour, and abounds with terms of choice, exclamations of fondness, and assurances

of perseverance. This is not weakness nor affectation, but the natural language of affection, which will be dumb for ever if it is to speak to the satisfying of casuists or logicians. This is the sense in which election and perseverance are to be understood—as fond utterances by the Spirit of God over those who have become tenderly affected towards God, and nicely observant of His holy and good law. So long, therefore, as they are presented to those for whom they are meant, they are pregnant with the happiest fruits, being the words of God's tenderness and love to those who are in a state to receive and entertain them. When offered to those unacquainted with God, they seem either without meaning, or bespeak the grossest favouritism. It is as if you would write a letter of most confidential friendship to a perfect stranger, who would forthwith conclude you were the most capricious man alive so to confide in one unknown. It is as if you would address a letter of love to a person unknown, who would conceive it so beyond all bounds of explanation as to hold it a premeditated insult. Now, as we said, it hath unfortunately happened that Christians think it their duty to offer such passages touching election and perseverance to those whose souls are not in a case to receive them, who see truly that it is a very comfortable condition to be standing in, if one could but attain to it. But how can he have the face to adopt this language of choice, and fondness, and assured safety, while he is yet at a distance from God, and has hourly experience of his hatred to what is good, and his proneness to what is evil,—his dislike to God, and his dishonour of Christ. He cannot, unless he were a fool or a knave, take such language as meant in earnest for him; and nothing else being offered to him, you lose the opportunity which, by better management, might have redounded to the glory of God, and the salvation of a human soul, which you have but hardened the more. I urge you again, that a beginner in the knowledge of the gospel, a stranger to the powers of the world to come, a babe in Christ, hath no part nor portion in that food which is for the nourishment of full-grown men. He must be fed with the tenderness of counsel, with the invitations to forgiveness, and the freeness

of grace, and the fulness of promise. And of the other food you present, it must be prospectively as that to which God will surely advance him. Be not afraid; counsel him in what God requires; assure him of God's universal love, and Christ's universal offer, and the Spirit's unbought operation. Shew him the course,—pilot to him the hidden rocks,—go before him, and encourage him, as God hath a thousand times commanded.

I exhort advanced Christians to feed their own souls with these revelations of God's grace, for they are intended to reward and satisfy them. It is their right part to forget the general offer, and apply to the special favours—to take Christ as their Saviour, God as their God, the Spirit as their Comforter, in a sense familiar and distinguishing. But while they thus embosom themselves in His secret tent, and feed on the fatness thereof, let them remember it was not so from the beginning,—that then they needed counsel, and watchfulness, and diligence,—that they tired and fainted, hoped and feared, and joined trembling with their mirth. They did not come by one stride into confidence of favour, and assurance of constancy. They learned from the Word of God, from the mouth of the priest, from the counsels of the ancients, and at length they came to feel strong in the inner man, good soldiers of Christ, that could war a good warfare. Then came their time for favour: they now can interpret without a commentator those passages of election and perseverance which once upon a time no commentator could make intelligible. The Scripture is a book that is to be understood like any other book, through experience of the truth of what it contains, through the answer of head and heart, of intellect, and conscience, and feeling. To one that has had no experience of religion, it will seem dark in many parts, as will a law book, or a medical book, or a poetical book, or a sentimental book, to a plain, plodding, homely countryman, but in other parts it will be as intelligible to a first reader and a first scholar in religion as to the most advanced. It will speak to the sins he is guilty of,—it will speak to the fears he hath of coming wrath,—it will speak to the wishes he hath of deliverance,—it will speak to his love of what is generous, and tender-hearted, and com-

passionate, and merciful. Well, take him upon what he understandeth, deal with him in as far as he alloweth. You cannot by any means work upon him by that of which he hath no experience, and with which he has no sympathy. Therefore it is folly, perverse folly, and moon-struck madness, to hold discourse with him upon the eternal decree, and the hidden mystery, and the inalienable right, and a thousand other things which nothing but the gradual enlightening of the Spirit of God can teach. Would you make a man whose eyes had been couched look first upon the sun shining in his strength? Would you take a man first from the miry clay into the inmost chamber of the sanctuary of God?

This I will say, that if the Bereans, and Glassites, and Sandemanians, and the Antinomians, and others who take such passages as our text for the whole gospel, and hold that assurance of salvation is the first act of faith, had their way of it, they would make such a Church as never was seen since the days of the German Anabaptists. For, in the name of all that is reasonable and godly, if a man by one stroke finish his work, what has he to do ever after? If a man by one fetch brings up all the fish in the deep, or all the diamonds in the mine, what more use is that deep or that mine to him? And if a Christian grasp the promises at one embrace, and step by one stride into the bosom of God, what use to him for ever is the Scriptures, the promises, the hopes, the warnings, the stimulations, the chastenings? I do allow, nay, I do always preach, that the first act of a Christian's pilgrimage commences from the fear of coming wrath, and hope, however faint, of deliverance; but with old Bunyan, that man of many thoughts, I do think he may wear his burden upon his back some little while before he finds the cross at which it unlooses and drops off of its own accord, and, being rid of it, that he has a hard and weary pilgrimage before him, with various assaults and deliverances, various hindrances and advancements.

Thus again have I endeavoured to throw some light upon a difficult subject; doing it as to wise men, and constantly appealing as to impartial men, not flinching from my convictions through fear of being mistaken, but trusting all my

thoughts fearlessly to your candour. For it is the wish of my heart that you should understand the truth, and that the truth should make you free; it is the wish of my heart to stand on the bridge which bestrideth the gulf between the Christians and the world, and to pilot the people over. For as the religious world goes, there is little of this clearing of the way. There is much rejoicing over those safely passed, much merry-making as prodigal after prodigal reacheth the happy shore; but ah! ah! for the poor world, blind and astray,—there are few messengers amongst them, few Pauls or Silases struggling in the press of the population to restrain their vain, their sinful sacrifices. This perceiving, this feeling, this lamenting, I do from time to time step into paths that are thorny, and that are suspected by the sanctified, in order, my beloved brethren, that each one of you who may happen to be ill at ease, sick at heart, restless and discontented, weary and heavy laden, may know of a surety that God is seeking to deliver and save you, and will most kindly receive and entertain you, and establish your feet in the way of His commandments, which is a new and living way that leadeth to honour, and glory, and life.

Therefore, men and brethren, take from the Word of God, and from the preachers of the word, that which best suiteth the present condition of your soul, and be not disconcerted by that which you are not yet in a condition to appropriate unto yourselves. You are all sinners, and conscious of sinfulness; have recourse, then, to the Son of God, who saveth you from your sins. Come unto Him, and take lessons at His feet how you may struggle with the body of sin and death which oppresseth you with its carnal load.

VIII.

PRAYER AND ACTION.

A PIOUS and devout spirit is so interwoven with the repose of the mind over the uncertain future, and with its tranquillity when the miserable and adverse accidents of the future come to open up, that, independently of the command of God, and His promise to hear and answer prayer, we have thought the subject worthy of examination, simply as an instrument for the attainment of happiness. Piety, wisdom, and action ought to be placed upon the same level as ministers to the peace of man: piety to confide to God the uncertain part of every undertaking; wisdom and action to secure that other part which God hath made dependent upon ourselves. These three give true fortitude to meet the event, and resignation to bear it when it is arrived, and pleasure to reflect upon it when it is past. We shall confirm the argument for uniting these ministers of our peace, by shewing the evil effects which result from desecrating them; in doing which we shall draw our examples, not from imagination, but from the real and existing world, religious and irreligious.

It is possible for piety to encroach upon the province of mind and action, and to beget a torpid and inconsiderate superstition; but the common case is for the latter to encroach upon the former, and almost or altogether to discharge it from our thoughts and our affairs. The evil effects of the one and the other of these encroachments, the good effects of a mutual harmony and encouragement, we shall point out to you.

Piety is always in that excess which entitles it to the name of superstition when it checks our exertions, or hinders us from the use of lawful and appointed means. The captain

who would throw up the helm in a storm, the seamen who would betake them to their knees for a continuance, and allow the opportunities of deliverance which God is sending to pass unimproved, are as unpardonable as the captain who in such a crisis gives his orders with an oath, or the seamen who go about their duty with imprecations. The prayer to God is as easily uttered as the hasty profanation of His holy name, and the silent ejaculation of prayer is as speedily said as the bold and bloody invocation of His wrath; and, in my esteem, it doth bespeak as brave a man to adopt the one course as to adopt the other; and any one who hath been in such risks, will agree with me in thinking that the cool, collected state of a devout man, is fitter to take the necessary measures than the hot and heady state of a blasphemer. In our countrymen the devout doth seldom carry it over the active; but amongst Catholic seamen, who repose such confidence in vows and the number of their prayers, it is most usual in a storm for all hands to betake themselves to their images, when they should betake them to God with their trust, and to their business with all their resources. It is so, also, amongst the Mohammedans, who are such strict Predestinarians as to strike to the fates when they fancy they discern them drawing near. And so also, I believe, with the seamen of the East Indies, who in the midst of a storm can with difficulty be kept to their posts. These are all instances of piety setting action to a side, and becoming ignorant and fatal superstition. The same tendency exists in pious people everywhere by land as well as sea, in Protestant countries no less than in Catholic; and against falling under it we ought constantly to be upon our guard. For instance, the same misuse of God's foreknowledge which enervates or rather annihilates the Turk, produces the same effect upon multitudes amongst ourselves who have a desire after religion, but fancy that they are powerless, incapable of helping themselves, till the angel of the Lord move the waters. It hath been my lot a thousand times, when pressing the subject of religious duties upon men, to have in reply, "You know we can do nothing of ourselves;" which I hold paramount with the Turk's saying he can do nothing to save his ship. Paul, when he was tempest-driven in Adria, had revelation from

the angel of God that there should not a soul be lost of all that were on board. Yet when the seamen would have come by the boat, to leave the rest to their shifts, Paul told the centurion to hinder them, for "unless these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved;" thus demonstrating that even the issue, when known, did not prejudice nor affect in any way the use of the proper means. But not only among those who are upon the outside of the holy temple of religion, and take no means of entreaty or activity to obtain admission, looking for a door to open by invisible agency, and themselves to be transported at once within the wall,—not only among these deluded bystanders, but amongst the religious themselves, doth this preponderance of piety over wisdom and action manifest itself. If they were as wise as they are pious, and had studied the means of grace as well as they know the fountain of all grace, they would not feel loath to tell a sinner what steps to take, —nor fondness to impress him with the idea of his inefficiency, —nor constantly conclude every discourse of active duty with the saving clause, that we can do nothing of ourselves; which method of proceeding doth cut the throat of all thought and action, and impede all progress, as much as if the captain of the ship should preach in the hour of need to his seamen how vain it was for them to put forth any endeavour. I reckon the separation of the religious from the company of worldly men to be another evidence of the same preponderance in this age of piety over well-directed and strenuous activity; otherwise they would embrace intercourse and free communion as the best instrument for serving the good cause which they have at heart. Also, the deafness of the religious towards the free and manly sentiment for which their predecessors have been evermore distinguished is a proof of the same overwhelming force of the pious sentiment over the active measures, otherwise they would know how much everything that is free, and manly, and liberal serves the ends of pure and undefiled religion. But we thank God that this state of things is rapidly giving way, and that human agency is coming to display in the religious world its wonted mighty power when conjoined with divine trust.

To descend from the general to the individual, I shall point

out for the edification of the pious present, how their piety may carry it over their wisdom and action in the affairs of life. They may presume upon the Divine ear, and prescribe a method of proceeding to the Lord. Now, however much it is our nature to form wishes and schemes, and lines of happy fortune for ourselves and those who are dear to us, and however much our duty to present these, purified of all vanity and selfishness, to the Lord's approval, and humbly to solicit the performance of the same, yet our desire should never rise into the magnitude of an assurance, for then our prayers would be without meaning and without use, or rather an act of dictation to Him whom we petition. Still let it be in the floating indecision of a wish, however oft besought; for God may intend something infinitely better, and certainly if He send not that, will send something infinitely wiser. You do but prepare yourselves for resistance to God's will, and for the snare of the devil, which is self-confidence, so to magnify your wishes into predictions, and place yourselves above the wisdom and the will of God. But if to your forecast, and presentiment, and endeavour to bring about that which seemeth to be best, you add devout trust in God, and, if need should be, perfect contentedness to be disappointed, and perfect conviction that all will turn out for the best, then you are in the most wholesome state of anticipation in which the mind can repose. Again, the spirit of piety is in superstitious excess when it overawes the thought or paralyses the action which the case calls for. Such expressions as, "Leave it to the Lord," "Wait till the Lord's time," are only allowable after all means have been taken: and truly, even then they bespeak an error, as if there was a time for men to work, and afterwards a time for God; whereas, all the time we work, we ought to work together with God, in the spirit of that wise saying of St Paul: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Another very popular mistake in this matter is the deferring endeavours after the conversion of our friends and family, till, as it is said, "God seems to be dealing with them." If it means only that we seized the opportunity, that is well; but if it means there is a time when

it becomes our duty, and not till then,—a time when we can have God's co-operation, but not before,—it is most self-magnifying conceit, as if we knew the times and the seasons, or as if God were not always disposed to save sinful men.

Now all these cases, whether in the individual or in the Church, in which piety overbears wisdom and action, are attended with most evil consequences to the cause of Christ. What hath brought the name of priest into contempt almost all the world over, but because they trust in the power of their prayers and services, to the prejudice of wise and prudent measures? What at this moment, in a neighbouring country, makes the policy of priests decried, but because they set up the God of their saints against all reason and the rights of men? What associates the name of saint with the idea of silliness at home, but because there is a body of the people which are ahead of them in the prudence and energy of their counsels? What makes the Methodists lose that right which they have to be blessed, as the best friends of order and morals, but because they have mixed up with their labours for the weal of souls so much superstitious confidence in their prayers, and so much mystery and incredible mummery in their conversions,—because they have made that most important of all events in the life of man turn upon some fortuitous incident or some unaccountable possession? To remove these slanders, by removing the occasion of them, to make the name of Christian awful for its wisdom and energy as well as for its sanctity, and to procure for the cause all the suffrages of unprejudiced men, we have thus been at pains, in the first place, to point out the cases in which piety is found in excess.

Let us now look upon the other side of the picture, and remark the instances of wisdom and activity being triumphant over piety, and the evil consequences which ensue; and exceeding sorry are we that it is so easy to point out the infinite number of people who are suffering in their peace and prosperity, and likely to suffer in their eternal interests, by separating two things which should never be parted—the exertion of our wisdom and endeavour upon the one hand, and trust in God to render us a blessing upon the other. For lack of this pious trust, behold, in the first place, what multi-

tudes surrender themselves to wicked and crooked practices. I do not speak before this congregation of the thieves and swindlers and cheats of every name, who, forgetting trust in God, fall into the snare of the devil, and are by him directed into those paths which lead to the chambers of the grave. Had these unfortunate and beguiled men conjoined a trust in God with the honest exercise of their labours, they would never have been forsaken, so far as to draw down disgrace upon themselves and upon those to whom they are dear. But as I speak to honest and rĕputable men, it behoves me to point out, for their advantage, the evils to which they are subjected by depending more upon their wits than upon the grace and blessing of the Lord. And, beloved brethren, I pray you, first of all, to reflect that you are liable to the stroke of adversity, and may come to be tried with those sore trials which prove the ruin of men as reputable and well-born as any who now hear me. In the vicissitudes of life you may be forsaken of all; and then, having no confidence of God, you are fallen indeed, and open to the evil ingress of the designing; which should you nobly withstand,—as many of you I doubt not have, upon the strength of honesty and honour alone,—still, it is a fiery and comfortless trial. God, truly, is the patron of the honourable and honest, and will not cease to send a blessing upon such conduct, whether it is besought from Him or not; but the blessing comes without any knowledge of the coming,—the morning dawns without any anticipation of its dawning,—liberty arrives without any tidings of its approach, and during the night of trouble the soul is without the comfort of hope; whereas had you put your trust in God, you would have recognised His hand in bringing you low, and you would have sought out the reason of it, and you would have discovered the improvement of it, and you would have laboured under this cloud with as hopeful and profitable a labour, as under the eye of day; and in God's good time you would have expected the dawn, either in time or in eternity, assured that He would not desert your soul while you continued to trust in Him, or desert your estate, but would provide bread and make water sure to you and to your children. Time would fail if I were to speak of the use of trust

in God in those seasons of affliction when our wits are scattered like unsubstantial chaff, and all our designs are melted like the shadow of a vision; or when our souls are weighed down within us by reason of grief, and our whole mind is a dungeon of sorrow, whence every faculty of thought and action are fled. These are seasons which you must encounter, and for which you should be furnished, and it is great folly for you to be without resources for these seasons, or to postpone the preparation because at the present smiles and health bloom in your house; as great folly as it would be for the ship circumnavigating the stormy globe, to carry with her no storm-rigging, to have no reefing tackle or spare ropes and sails and spars, and strong storm-anchors and boats, to give a double chance for the lives of the people. Have not you to navigate the round of trials, from dust back again to dust, the complete age of time, from the cradle to the grave? And shall not you meet the same accidents, trials, and discomfitures, which all before you have proved, and in which, of all that have proved them, those only have not been shipwrecked or lost who had their piety and trust in God to stand them in stead when every other help had failed?

But not to forecast the evil day, which we admonish you to provide against, we now pray you to mingle with us in the active, gay affairs of human life, which ye either daily witness or read of, if not participate in, and observe whether the want of piety doth not desecrate and deform the fair character of men. The future being so uncertain and so unstable, notwithstanding every endeavour of ours to secure it, it comes to pass that men join shoulder to shoulder and weave strong defences and alliances with each other, against its disasters. Herein they do well; and all insurances of property and life, all friendly associations against the day of distress, all savings-banks, and economical resources which men fall upon to fend each other's feebleness against the terrific future, are greatly to be admired as the most benevolent and delightful inventions of society for its own happiness and preservation. Moreover, they are another exemplification of that anxious restlessness which man hath about things to come, and another proof

how little composed he is in his mind until he has taken every step to secure himself against vicissitude and change. And it seems to me, that if men would but believe that after death there is a long, long future, big with momentous fates and destinies, they would address themselves to those insurances and policies which God hath opened in the gospel to stand between them and risk, and bring them into the fair haven of His rest. But to return. We do not object to such defences as man's wisdom hath devised honestly to meet the occurrences of the eventful future; that is, if they do not come instead of piety and trust in God. But, alas! man betaketh himself to many other shifts, which utterly degrade him. Wealth being a commodity which hath a sort of stability in it, (though, God knows, it is only a sort!) men become servants of it, and proud of it, and devoted to those who have it, to a degree which degrades their spiritual and immortal nature far beneath its true dignity. They will wed themselves to sickliness, to ignorance, to impiety, to age, and loathsome lust, for the sake of fortune, and embitter the whole of their worldly existence in order to build up, by means of a dowry and portion, a puny embankment against the tide of misfortune, and penury, and want, sacrificing youth, love, and happiness upon the altar, (if it deserves that honourable appellation,)—upon the drossy altar of mammon. They will toil from morning to night, and from night to morning they will dote and dream upon the securities of their wealth, and their happiness in having escaped the fluctuations of life, amidst which so many are struggling still. And sure it is great cause of thankfulness to have so escaped the tossings of anxious affairs; but, oh! it is a sad misplacement of affection to give these thanks, and the confidence which they should engender, to heaps of treasure,—to bills, bonds, and title-deeds, which the fire of a night may consume, or a thousand fortuitous chances invalidate. Oh, but though they were safe and secure as the steady earth itself, of which they are but a part, still, still it is a gross misplacement of the immortal soul's affections to ally them with the gross elements of fortune, and it works a total destruction of the pure and noble parts of manhood! Now, my brethren, ye are

active men engaged in money-making transactions, (and God prosper you, for your own and your children's sake!) but as you would not be so tarnished and vilified in your immortal souls, be careful, I pray you, to cultivate a commerce with God of piety and prayer, and to take empledgements of Jesus Christ against the calamities of the future, both in time and eternity, which must assuredly pass over you. Then go on and prosper in the name of God,—make fortunes, become rich, become great, become renowned; for you will not then become avaricious or sensual by becoming rich,—proud and imperious by becoming great,—haughty and unapproachable by becoming renowned: of which evil affections you shall become possessed, as assuredly as that the devil is present in that breast whence God is absent; as assuredly as that the devil's agents, which are the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, are present in that breast whence the fruits of the Spirit, which are peace, joy, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, and purity and truth, are absent.

IX.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. VI. 9.

After this manner therefore pray ye.

THE custom of the Gentiles, from which our Lord took occasion to give His disciples an everlasting type and model of prayer, was to repeat, and cry aloud, and multiply words, out of the ignorant notion that their god might be otherwise occupied, and needed to have his attention summoned,—or that he was asleep, and needed to be awakened, —that he was unwilling, and needed to be fatigued into compliance,—that he was hungry of praise, and needed to be flattered, of meat and drink, and needed to be fed, of avarice, and needed to be feed, of revenge, and needed to be propitiated with blood. Which custom our Lord brought to folly, by revealing that our Father in heaven knoweth what things we have need of before we ask Him, and is ready to bestow them, without the meed of any costly gift or tedious supplication, to the simple and sincere desire of men. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there among you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" So gracious a revelation is not less good and gracious for us than for the Gentiles, to remove whose blindness it was given; because each man by nature is blind as the

heathen to the true knowledge of God, and liable to misshapen opinions concerning Him, and ignorant practices of worship, which, though softened in the outward appearance, are, in the spirit and substance of them, which God regardeth, the very same as those more sensual and unseemly, but not more untrue notions and practices which our Lord rebuked. For example, though few in our Protestant churches are engrossed with the heathenish and Catholic delusion that they purchase, by the number of their askings, that good thing for which they pray, yet there be many everywhere, and, I doubt not, some now before me, who think they make a settlement or quittance with God of their transgressions by prayer and praise, and the other acts of charity and piety which they perform, thus making their prayers to stand as the payment for past debts, if not the purchase-money for future goods. This cometh of the idolatry of all men, the great catholic error of our fallen race, that we need to work for God's favour, and purchase for ourselves a place in His esteem, and a title to His benefits: some, like the priest of Baal, by the price of blood; some, like the worshippers of Moloch, by the offering of their first-born; some, like the classical religion, with the firstlings of the flock, the first-fruits of the harvest, libations of the untasted wine and the first shakings of the olive-tree; some, like the votaries of the Romish usurper, with a tale of *Aves*, and *Pater-nosters*, and penances, and alms-deeds; some, like the Unitarians, with their good and honourable works; some with noble and virtuous sentiments; some with wishes, and desires, and unperformed intentions: all, all, all people that dwell on earth seeking, by some gift which they esteem worthy of their God and equivalent to their prayer, to purchase His favour, and stand well in His regards. There is a holy Catholic Church founded upon this foundation, that God's favour is purchased by the death of His Son, and offered to us without money and without price. And there is Catholic idolatry founded upon this foundation, that the grace of God is purchased by our own merits, be they gifts, prayers abundant, or works of any kind. The former principle is capable of being misstated and misinterpreted—as oft

it is; but, with all its misstatements, and misinterpretations, it is the seed of godliness. The latter cannot, by any statement or interpretation, be made the seed of any godliness; and is the most fatal power of the heart, the sure antidote against which is the righteousness which is in Christ, and Christ only? The heathenish custom of trusting to their prayers, which has been fairly naturalised in the Romish corruption, and steals unperceived into our Protestant worship, and which truly is the universal form of unregenerate piety or natural religion, is but one outpost or flanking tower of this great fabric of natural error; to demolish which and rase it to the foundation the Son of God took unto Himself flesh, and in flesh revealed the way of redemption, and in flesh died to finish the work of the world's redemption.

That great demonstration of the inestimable grace of God hath nonplussed all the selfishness of man, and wherever it is believed doth destroy the very idea of renunciation, and, involving us in an unredeemed debt, doth leave us to be drawn unto God by the chords of love, and to be evermore possessed with the sense of overpowering obligation. So that he who receiveth the atonement and propitiation of Christ, and holdeth it in constant remembrance, as in our Protestant churches we profess to do, is delivered from the law of works in all things, and made obedient to the law of love; and in his prayers will not claim to err on that side on which the heathen and all the forms of Antichrist have erred. And here it is appointed that all our prayers should be offered up in the name of Christ, that we may never at any time relapse into the antichristian error that we obtain this on account of our many words, or our meritorious actions. And, therefore, to pray to saints, or for the sake and in the name of saints, is to overthrow the foundation of prayer, and convert it into a medium of separation, from being the great medium of communion with the Father.

I shall now, therefore, good Christian people, take it for granted that you are delivered from this error against which the Lord lifted up His testimony, and that your prayers are the breath of your desirous spirit, the uplifted vow of your

affectionate hearts to your heavenly Father, because you know that He is good and bountiful, and that His mercy endureth for ever; and that no selfish idea of right, or commercial idea of equivalents, enter at all into your thoughts. But think not, therefore, that the Lord's Prayer is no longer useful to you because you are no longer under the prejudices from which it was given to deliver men; for there are many other prejudices by which our prayers are blinded, many other errors into which they fall, from which the careful study of this model may deliver us. For be it remarked, that He who is the truth could utter nothing but the perfect truth; and, therefore, His sayings, though suggested by the occasion, must have in them an indestructible wisdom; and when giving His disciples a model of prayer, when teaching them how to pray, His lesson will be applicable to all His disciples, and His style to all ages of the Church. That, as in the missionary work, though His first instructions were given upon a particular occasion, and to answer an immediate end, they are not, therefore, occasional, or temporary, but contain in themselves a seed of truth which shall endure for evermore. But as it is a matter of great importance to put the authority of this prayer beyond a doubt, we shall go into the argument of those who infringe it, and counsel them at large; after which we shall endeavour to explain the precise end which this prayer was intended to serve; and conclude by pointing out the great grace, and kindness, and blessing, which our Lord bestowed upon His disciples in giving them such a precious document, having such high and important ends.

We are then, first, to deal with those who undervalue its authority in the Christian Church. The argument which they make use of for their end is, that its petitions are all to be found in the Old Testament, or the prayers of the synagogue then in use, and that it is not offered in the name and for the sake of Christ, and containeth none of the peculiar doctrines of the Christian faith, and therefore ought to be regarded as a form for the use of His disciples in their then unenlightened condition; afterwards to be superseded when the more full dispensation of the

Spirit should be bestowed upon the Church. If so be that the several petitions are to be found written in the Old Testament, and used in the nineteen prayers of which the synagogue service consisted,—concerning which I do not dispute,—it is to my mind not invalidated thereby, but rendered, if anything, still more sacred. For the Old Testament is the revelation of the same everlasting word and wisdom of God, the inspiration of the same unchangeable Spirit, as the New; and the prayers of the synagogue then in use are such prayers as any Christian may be well content to offer up, being generally collects from the Holy Scriptures. If, then, our Lord, from these two sacred and plentiful fields, doth, as it were, cull the most odoriferous flowers, and give them to His disciples for the spiritual incense of a sweet-smelling savour, with which our Father loveth to be approached, are we to reject His gift because He brought it from these most holy sources, and did not create it anew by His almighty power and wisdom? Why create what He had already created? The Old Testament is His creation: the Word of God which became flesh spake it to the fathers by the mouth of the holy prophets. And being once spoken, what authority doth it further need? A great privilege it is, out of the large contents of its devotion, to have a selection, and, as it were, the quintessence of the whole brought into short compass for our sakes. As the Sabbath-day was holy among the portions of time, because the Lord chose it from among the days to rest thereon, and to bless it; so ought the petitions of this prayer, if so be that they are all derived from the Old Testament, to be more sacred, because the Lord chose them from that which was already sacred and holy to make it more sacred and holy by His unerring choice. For the second part of the argument, that it is not presented in the name of Christ, or its petitions couched in the forms of Christian doctrine, whosoever dwelleth upon that head, had rather make the addition than daringly abrogate the prayer. He might as well abrogate all the parables because they do not contain the explicit doctrine of His Messiahship, but took a wise veil

for the sake of Jewish blindness; and abrogate all His sayings and doctrines, because they partake the same spirit of accommodation. But they err, not knowing what they affirm. Hath the title "Our Father" no Christian significance, by which He was seldom entitled of the Jews? Has "Thy kingdom come" no relation unto Christ, who was the Prince of that kingdom? "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,"—doth not that petition tell of the Christian dispensation? But the best proof of its being a Christian, and not a Jewish prayer, is this, that it hath in it nothing Jewish; and to my mind it is most manifest that a Jew could not enter into its spirit. There is no mention of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,—of Zion, or Jerusalem, or His people Israel, or their deliverance from their enemies, and vengeance, and visitations of wrath,—of the temple, or the sanctuary, or the ark,—of the covenant, or the cherubim, —of the law, or of the testimony, or aught else peculiar to that favoured people. It breathes no spirit of a separate interest, but consists of expressions enlarged as the human race. It builds nothing upon sacrifice or offering, contains no symbolical language, hath no allusions to the events of Jewish history,—nothing, in fine, of that nationality and narrowness which we recognise in every prayer contained in the Old Testament, or in the synagogue service of the Jews. Therefore, from whatever source derived by our Lord, it is most manifest that it was devised to His disciples of every kindred, and people, and tongue; and of all is the least fitted for a Jew, who, if he could understand its enlarged and copious spirit,—which indeed I question,—were certainly wholly indisposed to relish it as the expression of his devotions and desires unto Jehovah the God of Abraham, who dwelt between the cherubim, and loved the gates of Zion, and had made Jerusalem the desire of the whole earth.

It is true that the name of Christ is not subjoined to it, as is now the form among the Christian churches; but to have the name of Christ appended no more constitutes a prayer Christian, than not to have it appended constitutes it unchristian. That which forms the essence of a Christian prayer is not any form, however reverent, or any mention of Christ's

mediation, however frequent, but the constant feeling, through all its parts, of that confidence, and love, and filial submission unto God for the generation whereof in the human soul His Son became flesh and dwelt among us. So that we conceive the perfection of Christian prayer may be expressed without even the mention of Christ's name, by a heart which breathes out the thoughts, and feelings, and holy raptures with which it hath been impregnated by the Word and Spirit of Christ, by the doctrine of the heavenly Teacher, and the unction of the Holy One. Nay, we reckon that the moment we feel it incumbent as it were to stipulate with God for the freeness of our approach by the formal revealing of our right in Christ, that moment we have fallen from the highest pitch of confidence, and subsided towards a lower level of doubt and formality. As it indicates a feebler communion with any man to be ever and anon casting up in your mind the memorials, and pledges, and other evidences of your intimacy, and recounting in his ear the encouragements, overtures, and other inducements which he held out to its formation, than when, without reserve or hesitation of any kind, and without formal summoning of strength, you go forward and cast yourself upon his sympathies, and open your inmost heart to his observation, counting surely upon the reception of a bosom friend: so in prayer it doth indicate a more close communion to have been begotten towards the Father when our heart hath been converted to Him with all her affections, our soul with all her desires, our mind with all her faculties, our strength with all its powers, which they express by every opening of the mouth, and manifest by every action of the life, than that we be halting along by the help of particular doctrines, and bracing our spirits by the recollection of various encouragements, and keeping our lips to the precise and formal mention of our right and privilege to speak in God's most high and holy presence. The perfection of feeling is to enjoy, and the perfection of the utterance of feeling is to be unrestrained. And he who hath been brought nigh to God by the blood of Christ, and near the centre for the enjoyment and expression of the blessedness which he there partakes, hath better learned Christ, and doth better please

God, than he who but knows that there is a new and living way to come nigh, and employs himself in thanking God for the same, and assuring his soul to venture to approach unto Him thereby. The whole mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, the whole reformation and renewal of the spirit, with all the varied revelations of God by prophet, priest, evangelist, and apostle, are intended merely to beget within the bosom of an alienated creature that primeval feeling and confidence towards God, which is the original and abiding consciousness of every creature in its unfallen state. And that man hath most profited under the restoring dispensation in whom the primeval feeling of the love of God hath been restored in largest, sweetest, most assured experience, so that he feeleth it like a child to its parent, and speaketh it with the simplicity of a child who knoweth it and knoweth nothing beside. And whoever hath come to the condition of doing so, doth evince far better than by a thousand accomplishments the work of Christ upon his heart, and is nearer the answer of his prayers than if he made mention of the name and merits of Christ a hundred or a thousand times. To speak thus is not to undervalue but to magnify the office of the great Christian Advocate and Intercessor, seeing that only through the grace and truth which came by Him can this lofty reach of communion be attained; but being once attained in its breathing, unstipulating confidence, in its close and certain fellowship, there needeth not to evince its reality that we descend to some of the lower gradations through which it was arrived at, or condescend upon the particular helps and achievements by which we ascended so high into the confidence of God, but rather use our noble and blessed place for the satisfying of our own souls, and encouraging the souls of others, for presenting petitions for the sake of ourselves and children, for the sake of the Church of Christ, and the unregenerate world.

The lower gradations of devotion need doubtless to be passed through, and the helps of Christ's revelation to be diligently employed; and in our public prayers, where the case and condition of many are to be touched upon, these helps and encouragements should be faithfully recounted in

the hearing of the people, and taken advantage of for awakening divine communion within their souls; but, nevertheless, I insist that this is a lower state of communion between man and the Godhead than the other which we have described, and of which we have a specimen before us. Now, as our Lord, when speaking for this occasion, spoke also for all occasions, which makes his sayings and parables to be as applicable now as when they were uttered; so when giving a rule upon any part of duty, or a measure to any feeling, it is always the perfection of the duty and the highest exaltation of the feeling which He commends, so that from His lips we are to look for a form of prayer, not from the lowest but the highest condition of the pious and devout soul. In proof of which you will bear me witness that this sermon on the mount, in the bosom of whose brilliant purities the Lord's Prayer is enshrined, lays down, not the ordinary and common attainments of man in the various departments of duty whereof it treats, but the utmost lengths to which the human faculties can go in its ideas of chastity, justice, forgiveness, piety, and trust,—not trite rules to be conned and kept with an easy, every-day regularity, but certain lofty ideas and perfections which are to be kept in the soul's eye through the whole of life, and shewn often as the unattained, and perhaps, in this life, unattainable, yet true form of the human soul, with which she will be crowned as a palm of triumph, after she hath run her race, and finished her course of earnest pursuit and fiery trial. So this form of prayer is on a level with these, perfect in its kind, a model for all generations—to utter which in its true spirit is the last attainment of devotion, as not to resist evil is the last attainment of forbearance, to love our enemy is the highest pitch of forgiveness, and to take no thought for the morrow is the strongest evidence of faith in the good providence of God.

Having thus defended this precious document from the hands of those who would rob us of its treasure, we come now, in the second place, to point out what purpose our Lord intended it to serve in His Church. I do not think that these words, "After this manner pray ye," are to be understood as presenting to His disciples an exact form of prayer from which

they were not to deviate, but a style of prayer after which they were to conform this part of the Divine worship. So that the idea of this prayer, as if it contained everything which man needed to ask of his heavenly Father, is not more inconsistent with the other parts of Scripture which touch upon prayer, and direct us in all things to pray and give thanks, than it is extravagant in itself, and unwarranted by the preface with which the prayer is introduced. The Gentiles erred in the style of their prayers, thinking that vain repetitions were necessary to interest their idol; the Pharisees also trusted to the length and number of their prayers; and He undertook to guard His disciples from their errors. To which end he gave them a specimen of what a prayer ought to be, and told them to pray in that manner,—not in "these words," but in "this manner." Now, it is not needed, in order to value the magnitude of the gift, to exaggerate it, as if it contained the whole burden of the soul's desires; it is but to encourage the soul in indolence, and bring her under the dominion of formality, and therefore we reject this idea of it altogether. Neither, upon the other hand, do we think that our Lord's desire is fulfilled when we transfer this form into the number of our prayers, and oft repeat it during the service of God. This is to come short of the commandment, "After this manner pray ye;" which is not, "often pray thus," but "pray after this manner." But the commandment is fulfilled when we depart from the rant and rhapsodies, from the pompous expressions and turgid declamations, from the long-drawn and wearisome details, of which our prayers too frequently consist, and gather up our spirits to the exact thoughts, distinct feelings, and appropriate language in which the prayer is expressed,—when we take it not for a form but for a model, when we make it not so much a part of our prayers as the spirit of our prayers, learning from it the style and manner both of feeling and language which we should use towards our Creator.

There is no point in which man needed so much a lesson as in this. For how could he, who was accustomed to converse with his fellows, be able to know in what way to express himself to the eternal, immortal, and invisible, the only living and true God? There was almost a perfect certainty,

that both in the manner and matter of our addresses we should transfer to God some of those qualities of man, with whom and for whom all our other forms of discourse are held, —or slide into familiarity of manner, as if He were an equal,— or condescend to tedious explanation of our meaning, as if, like men, He were undiscerning of our inward thoughts,—or that we should treat His ear with eloquence of words, or fall into some other forms of discourse which are proper to the spirits with whom we are wont daily to converse, but not proper to the Father of spirits, with whom we hold fellowship by prayer, — or that, conceiving of His awful majesty and infinite power and holiness and inflexible justice, we should fall into utter dismay, and prostrate our spirits in speechless fear, or seek to win His favour by flattering speeches and costly offerings, and other means which prevail with the kings and potentates of the earth. There are a thousand errors on every side to which we are liable, and from which nothing could deliver us but a pattern or model for our study and imitation. This model Christ hath given to His disciples, and requireth of them to study it with care, and follow that style of thought and feeling and language which it contains.

While on the one hand, therefore, we maintain the authority of this Christian document, on the other hand we are far from giving to it that mysterious importance which it hath received in our sister Church; where, by a strange perversion of its purpose, it hath by frequent and vain repetition come to keep up the heathenish delusion of vain repetitions and much speaking which it was meant to do away and abolish. For I do not hesitate to affirm, that while the disuse of it in our Church has removed it from the public eye as a standard of Christian devotion, the frequent repetition of it in other churches has given to it, in the minds of the less informed, (nay, gave it in the mind of such a man as Dr Johnson,) a certain mysterious, talismanic virtue, savouring not a little of the muttering and oft-repeated exclamations which still form the characteristic of heathen worship. Its end is answered, not when we repeat it once or often, but when we conform the feeling and expression of our prayers to its model; when they have the same fulness of meaning, the same sobriety of

words, the same distinctness of conception, the same conformity to the spirit of the Divine revelations; when wordiness and tautology are rebuked by the weighty matter which is wrapped up in few words; when adoration is conveyed without adulation, and praise ascribed without flattery; when want is expressed without meanness, and desire urged with hope, and faith breathes through every part of this blessed occupation; when it is an exercise, not of the ingenious mind, but of the believing soul,—an utterance, not of the eloquent tongue, but of the speaking heart,—a discourse, not for the ear of any audience, but for the all-hearing ear of God. If any one hath thus proposed it to himself as a model, and is in the habit of regarding it as such, we think he has fulfilled the spirit of his Master's injunction, "After this manner pray ye," even though he should not go through the form of regularly using it whenever he bends his knee. But though it should be used as an integral part of our devotions, if it produce no influence on the spirit and style of the other parts, which continue to wander loose and ill-digested and prolix, as if there were no model after which to conform them, then we think that the spirit of the commandment, "After this manner pray ye," hath been altogether missed. We shall be better able to draw out its characteristics when we have examined its several parts. Whatsoever these are, our Lord would have them to be the characteristics of all our prayers. It is more, therefore, a standard whereby to estimate our devotions, public and private, than a form under which to express our souls' manifold wants; and being of such high importance, nothing can be more reasonable than that we should occasionally use in worship that which ought to be the copy for all our devotions; while, at the same time, we guard against the idea, that when it hath been so employed, its purpose hath been fulfilled. This, then, we regard as the chief design for which Christ gave it to His disciples—strongly to mark the contrast between the Christian and the heathen worship of God, and to stand for a memorial to all ages of His Church, lest at any time His Church should stray in her devotion from purity and simplicity, into some of the endless varieties of errors or refinement of human taste.

X.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. VI. 9.

Our Father.

WHEN God appeared unto Moses in the burning bush, and commissioned him to save and deliver His people Israel from the land of Egypt and the house of bondage, Moses, among his other doubts and hesitations, proposed this question unto the Lord: "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." This was the name by which He chose to be known—I AM, the self-existent Being, or Jehovah; the incommunicable name, which could not without horrid blasphemy be applied unto any other besides Himself. Thereby God made known His unchangeable existence, and constituted Himself an object of faith and request,—for he that cometh unto God must first believe that He is,—and taught men that the Godhead was not an imagination of the fancy, nor a speculation of the intellect, nor a work of the sense of man, but an outward existence, though invisible, a living and acting Being, whose highest designation was not how He is, or where He is, or why He is, but that He is as He is, and as He pleaseth to be. In thus taking a name which denoted existence independent of all time, place, and cause, He made known the foundation of all religion; which, while it is founded upon the reasonings of the mind concerning the Divine attributes, is no reli-

gion, but only an idolatry of that faculty of the mind which employeth itself in the speculation. As the poor heathen fashioneth an idol of wood and stone, and then falleth down and worshippeth the work of his hands, so the intellect fashioneth an idea of God, and falleth down and worshippeth its work; and the heart in like manner fashioneth a God all benevolence, and mercy, and sweetness, and straightway falleth down and worshippeth its work; to which different forms of idolatry, proper to different conditions of human cultivation, the Lord brought an end by revealing to Moses, as the name He was to be known by, I AM THAT I AM; not that which ye understand or desire me to be, but that I am, which I will teach you if you will but hear my voice and believe the word of my testimony—a God revealed to faith, from faith to faith, not found out by searching, or constituted and created by metaphysical operations of the human mind.

To this name of self-existence, God added other names taken from His acts, also revealed to faith—names embodying acts in His government of the world, not abstract ideas of power and goodness, such as are contained in the definition of God in our Catechism, and exhibited at large in such books as "Clarke's Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God;" that is, a God of infinites, which I hold to be no God at all, but a deification of the powers and laws of human thought. Those names which He takes are of this kind: "The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob," bringing to mind the history of His dealings with the patriarchs; "The God which led them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," bringing to mind His mighty acts shewn by His servant Moses; "The Lord of hosts," bringing to mind the battles which He had won for them by Joshua, and Jethro, and Samson, and David, and all the princes over the nations round about; "The God of Zion," bringing to mind the worship which was performed to Him in Zion; "The God that dwelleth between the cherubim," bringing to mind the more sacred worship of the holy of holies, the ark of the covenant, the mercy-seat, the oracle of Urim and Thummim, and whatever else was extraordinary in the dispensations of His government. All these names have refer-

ence to His actions, and contain a brief record thereof; they are helps to faith, not incitements to speculation—resting upon facts which had an outward existence, not upon ideas which have their origin in the mind. And this is the difference between the God of the Christian and the God of reason or of poetry, that the one is the I AM who hath done thus and thus, and hath promised to do thus and thus; the other is the being whom my mind creates thus and thus, who is because I am, and who is thus because I am thus; the God of the Christian, a God of faith; the God of the sceptic, a God of reason; the one the Father, the other the child of the human spirit; the one governing, the other governed by the human spirit; the worship of the one being true worship, the worship of the other being self-worship, or idolatry.

Those names by which God was commonly known under the old dispensation partake generally of the narrow and limited character of that dispensation, because His chief revelations and acts were amongst a part, and for a part, of the human race; but when the prophets arose, who were the preachers amongst all nations of His righteous judgments, they sometimes used a larger and more general style in speaking of God; and amongst them Isaiah is conspicuous, who had this remarkable anticipation of brighter views: "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting." But it was left for the revelation of grace and truth by Jesus Christ to naturalise this name of God upon the earth, "Our Father." It doth occur at times in the Old Testament on particular occasions, as "He is the Father of the fatherless," but even in that sense most rarely; and very seldom—nowhere indeed that we remember, save in the passage quoted from Isaiah—is He set forth free from all restriction and limitation of any kind, as the Father of all families, the common Father of the children of men. And the reason is obvious—because the fulness of time was not yet come for making known the revelation of His Son, who was to bring the children into peace with their Father, to bring the prodigals back again to their Father's house. But when

this time was come which was set to favour Zion, the Son came forth from the bosom of the Father, and published the glad tidings of peace, and made known the revelation of God the Father, and that henceforward all who would come unto Him by the Son might call Him Father, and expect all the privileges of the sons of God. He came to gather all nations into one, and redeem them from false idols to worship God, even the Father; and He appointed His apostles to baptize all nations in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and He taught His disciples in their prayers to begin from this beginning, "Our Father;" and in the Gospels alone this appellation of God occurs about a hundred times; and in the Epistles no less constantly,—so that it may be regarded as the name expressing most nearly the sense in which God wisheth to be regarded by us, the tender and compassionate relation in which He desireth to stand unto the human race.

Therefore, all forms of prayer which begin from conceptions of God as the God of nature, the soul of the universe, and wind themselves through high-wrought and long-drawn periods concerning the infinite enlargement of His attributes, and power, and works, however expedient they be for raising the soul to a high temper of adoration, want the essential character of a Christian prayer, and speak rather the man of science or the poet than the humble and faithful believer in Christ; and all forms of prayer and schemes of doctrine which uphold God in the character of a sovereign doing His will and dividing amongst men according to His pleasure,—some advancing and blessing, some reprobating and cursing, for the pleasure of His will,—however expedient they may be to restrain the self-confidence and humble the vanity of men, are essentially Jewish in their character, and out of place in the Christian temple, whereof the gate is open to all, where there is no longer any middle wall of partition, but all of every nation are welcome who fear God and work righteousness. The spirit of a Christian prayer is to regard God as the most bountiful of fathers, who out of the greatness of His grace hath given His Son to open the barred gates of His house unto the children of men, and bring the chief of

sinners even to His royal presence to kiss the end of His sceptre, and in that blessed aspect regarding Him, to come unto Him as children to a father able and ready to help them in the time of need,—never to doubt, never to misgive, but to rest assured that as a father pitieth His children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. Our prayers, therefore, should be from the heart,—copious effusions of affectionate hearts towards Him who first loved us; not invocations of fear, nor beautiful disportings of fancy among the wonderful works of God, nor high-wrought eulogiums of His goodness and grace, but breathings of tenderness, expressive of true affection to Him whom we love, of penitence towards Him we have offended, of praise towards Him whose praise is recorded in the experience of our soul, of assured trust and confidence as of children to the most long-suffering and patient of fathers. Our hearts should open themselves in prayer to God for their many wants, as the infant openeth its hungry mouth and lifteth up the cry in the ear of its mother; and as that infant, being filled and satisfied, smiles in the face of its mother, and spreads its little hands to embrace her in token of the gladness of its heart, so ought our spirits, being filled with the answers of their prayers, to feel an inward joy and thankfulness to the Father of spirits, and call upon the lips and hands, and every other obedient member, to express with songs and attitudes of praise the emotions with which they overflow.

But, alas! this most tender and heart-moving designation of God doth seldom impress our hearts with that tenderness for which the Almighty in His grace did permit its use, and our Saviour did purchase the privilege of using it with His most precious blood. Most frequently it passeth from our lips without any outgoing of affection or sense of duty, and into God's all-hearing ear it oft ascendeth from a most thankless and rebellious offspring. I suppose the man doth hardly exist in Christendom whose first utterance to Heaven was not couched in these simple and tender sounds, "Our Father." But where is he in Christendom who shall lift up his face to Heaven, and say without a blush, "I have been Thy dutiful son?" To One, and One alone, it was given to testify with His

departing voice, "Holy Father, I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Against this want of reverence, and piety, and affection, in uttering this privileged name, no one here present will hold himself guiltless, and many will readily confess that they deserve much rebuke, and are obnoxious to much wrath and indignation for the heartless formality with which they have ofttimes uttered it; and it were no improper office in me to administer that rebuke, and shew forth the iniquity of which we are all guilty. But it seemeth somewhat out of place by rebuke to plead for a Father's sacred rights, or with strong words to win back the affections of an erring child. Therefore, as upon earth the voice of forgotten duty is not reawakened in the heart of a froward child by bitter upbraidings or sentences of judgment, but by the welling memory of parental acts and the knowledge of a parent's longing love; so, without addressing myself to any fear, I shall endeavour, by the recital of our Father's goodness and our Father's love, of the high obligations of our birth, of our bountiful inbringing in the home of our Father's providence, of the largesses of His grace, and the stored treasures of His glory,—by these I shall endeavour to move within your mind that love of God and reverent use of His parental name, which slumbers in all, and in many, I fear, is well-nigh dead. And while I so endeavour, may the Spirit bear witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, and may we receive the Spirit of adoption whereby we shall cry, "Abba, Father."

Then, brethren, I pray you to look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and unto the hole of the pit out of which ye are dug. Take up a handful of dust and ashes, and then behold the materials out of which the Lord God Almighty hath fashioned man,—this living, moving frame of man, so quick and pregnant with all sensual and spiritual feeling. And if you would know the pains which your Father hath been at with the work of His hands, look to the tribes, from the worm to the lion, all made of as good materials and many of them better,—in size, in strength, in fleetness, and in durability surpassing man. But where is their counsel, their government, their science, their religion? Which of them has any fellow-

ship with God, or any reasonable intercourse with one another? The other creatures are as it were but the outward endowments of man's being—to clothe him, to feed him, to lay their lusty shoulders to his burden, to carry him, to watch him, and to minister in other ways to his entertainment. And what is the earth whereon we tread, and which spreads its flowery carpet beneath our feet? and what are its fruits, with their various virtues, to sustain, refresh, and cheer our life, as the corn, the wine, and the oil? and what the recurring seasons of divided time—the budding spring, the flowery summer, the joyful vintage, and the lusty harvest, and the homely, well-stored winter? and what the cheerful outgoings of morn and eve, and balmy sleep, and radiant day?—what are they all, I ask, but the soft cradle and gentle condition into which our Father hath brought His children forth. Is there nothing fatherly in the costly preparation and the gladsome welcoming of our coming, in the bosom of plentiful affection stored for us, in the fruitful dwelling-place, to the inheritance of all which we are born? Is it nothing that the range of our mansion is to the starry heavens, and not cooped within the circumference of a narrow state? Is it nothing that the heavens drop down fatness upon us, and that the river of God's bounty watereth all the earth where we dwell, rather than that we should have griped the rock for our bed, or found our birth-place in the oozy channels of the deep? Let us praise our heavenly Father that He hath made us with more understanding than the beasts of the field, and with more wisdom than the fowls of heaven; that He hath made us a little lower than the angels, and crowned us with glory and honour, and made us to have dominion over the work of His hands, and hath put all things under our feet, all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea. What is man, O our Father, that Thou art mindful of him? or what the son of man, that Thou rememberest him with such loving-kindness and tender mercy?

And now, my brethren, from looking upon the honours and blessings of your birthplace and inheritance, look, moreover, upon the treatment which ye have received at the hands

of your Creator, and say if it doth not bespeak Him more than fatherly in His love and carefulness. Our bread hath been provided, and our water hath been made sure; we have been protected from the summer's smiting heat and the winter's biting cold. The damps of the night have not settled chill upon our raiment, nor hath the pestilence which walketh at noon-day blown its deadly blast across our path. The Lord hath been the length of our days and the strength of our life, from our birth even until this day. And He hath surrounded us with kinsmen and friends; or, if we be alone, He hath proffered to us His own fatherhood, and the brotherhood of His only-begotten Son. And happily he hath surrounded us with lovely children, to stand in our room when we are gone. And He hath given us a house and habitation among men, and found us in their sight more favour than we deserved. Hath He not hidden our faults from the knowledge of men? Hath He not been very tender to our reputation, which, by a turn of His providence, He could easily have blasted? Hath He not restrained the wrath of our enemies? No sword hath come up against us,—no famine hath pinched us,—no plague, no pestilence, nor blasting winds have bitten us,—no weapon formed against our liberty hath prospered. Another year hath told out its months and seasons; each day of it hath brought us our necessary meals and luxurious entertainments, each night its refreshment of downy sleep; each Sabbath its rest and blessed ministry of salvation. The heavens hath dropped fatness upon our habitations, pleasant are our dwellings, and the places where our lines have fallen are very good. The exile doth visit our shores for a secure shelter; the slave doth touch our shores and he is free. The land is a good land, and floweth with milk and honey. The land is a good land, where judgment and justice, right and equity, piety and religion, have taken up their abode, and every man sitteth under his own vine and his own fig-tree, and none dareth to make him afraid. Because God is our Father, and the Holy One of Israel is our Preserver, He that was the God of our fathers hath also become the God of their children. We will praise Him, and teach our children the praise of their Father, who, though He

dwelleth in the heavens, hath pitched His tabernacle in the midst of us.

Earthly fathers, during the years of unconscious infancy and idle boyhood, are well content to provide food and raiment for their children. But infant and school-boy days being passed over, it were thought high indiscretion in a son to sit at his father's board and consume his father's substance, without offering a helping hand to procure it. And our fathers would be thought not unfatherly, but discreet, in sending us away to shift for ourselves, if thus we continued to hang on, thoughtlessly profuse or sullenly perverse. But which of us hath yet escaped out of the unconsciousness of childhood or thoughtlessness of boyhood towards our Father which is in heaven, have yielded Him filial reverence or common gratitude, or even respected the laws of His household? We have all been sitting at His common board; we have been all served out of His stores, from sufficiency to the utmost profusion. We have been beholden to Him for all things, from the least even unto the greatest, and without Him have we nothing which we enjoy. Not one of us can create a morsel; not one of us can make the bitter sweet, the poisonous nutrimental. We can hand it about from one to another, and cast the seed of God's giving into the earth of God's fertilising, and wait the increase of God's sending; but if it pleases Him only to send ninety-nine fold, we cannot make it one hundred fold. And yet, wretched and ignorant creatures! we fancy we do it all. We place it under lock and key, and call it all our own. Our own hand, say we, hath gotten us this; and of what we have not the impudence to claim, we give the credit of it to chance or fortune, saying it is our good luck; or if we stumble at a time upon the word Providence, it is often only a name for the course of events, unaccompanied with any feeling of God as their Sovereign and wise Director. Now what is like to this in the disobedience of earthly children? This is worse than refusing to help our father in the provision of those good things upon which we fatten; it is to laugh our Father out of His own,—it is to mock His authority, which we should reverence, and to seize and pillage His gifts, which we should thankfully partake. Well might our heavenly Father

appeal to heaven, which had looked upon such ingratitude, and to the earth, which had clothed our wickedness and supplied our helpless need by the appointment of her good Creator: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but my people doth not know, my children do not consider."

Oh, what affection, then, passing the ordinary bounds of fatherly love, doth it bespeak in the Almighty, that He overlooketh our ingratitude, and forgetteth our ignorant mockeries, and feedeth us so copiously with food and gladness, making His sun to arise upon the evil and the good, and sending rain upon the just and the unjust! It is not inability to change the course of events; for He is Almighty, and could revoke His gifts with the same facility with which He bestowed them upon us. It is not ignorance of our ingratitude and wantonness; for He is omniscient, His eyes behold, and His eyelids try the children of men. It is not insensibility to His own honour and glory; for He is a jealous God, and in the first commandment upon His first table of laws hath written, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." It is not toleration of sin; for He hateth iniquity, and wickedness cannot stand in His sight. How, then, doth He come to suffer our misusage of His gifts, and to continue His gifts none the less bountifully? He is just and jealous of His glory,—He is conscious of every secret thought and hidden action, and able to bring summary and condign vengeance if He chose; but the love with which He loveth us preventeth Him,—His fatherly love stayeth His almighty hand,—His long-suffering patience withholdeth His prompt and instant execution of justice. It is the excess of His indulgence, the patience of His affection, the ardour of His love towards us, His most ungrateful children, whom He follows with a stream of bounty like the waters of Meribah, if haply they may by His kindness be persuaded to return; and for our return He waits with longing carefulness, ready to welcome us with the joy which is in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. Yea, in our most rebel courses and ungodly moods, that God against

whom we have rebelled doth wait upon our wants with kindly ministry, strewing the wilderness with food, and showering down His gifts from heaven, even though in the midst of His showering gifts we should revel and blaspheme.

O brethren, if it be true, as the Psalmist hath said, that as the eyes of the dumb and needy creatures wait upon their feeder when he goeth his rounds at meal-time, so the eyes of all things wait on God, and He giveth them their meat in due season,—He openeth His hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing,—that which He giveth them they gather,—when He openeth His hand, they are filled with good,—when He hideth his face, they are troubled,—when He taketh away their breath, they return unto their dust,—when He sendeth forth His Spirit, they are created, and the face of the earth is renewed; and that all our toil and labour under the sun is but the work of the servant who prepares and serves our table, while the great Householder provides the ample store;—oh, if this should be actually true, what a load of ingratitude we are pressed withal, and what an intensity of fatherly care hath pursued us, though we have had no feeling of His parental tenderness in the lot of our life—no remorse for our greedy and thankless absorption of our Father's plentiful dowry, as the sand absorbeth the dew and rain of heaven!

XI.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. VI. 9.

Our Father.

WHILE I thus discourse of God's liberality, and tell of all His goodness, I am fully alive to the varieties of our fallen condition, and that though we be all born in this splendid and well-furnished palace of creation, some are destined to chambers cheerless enough. I am alive to the straits amongst which many an unconscious innocent is doomed to make its hapless entry into life; and that, for the lack of the warm accommodation and shelter which tender age requireth, many depart prematurely, to seek their nourishment and upbringing in another world than that which frowned on their birth; how the feeble infancy of man is girdled round with accidents and diseases, which take a special delight in preying upon childhood; and the little babe hath to pass one deadly line, and then another deadly line, and a third, before it can be said to be fairly entered into life; and being there arrived, how infirm and uncertain is our tenure, and how death nods and threatens us on every side, and our worldly condition is unstable, and cannot for a moment be trusted in as sure. I am not ignorant that adversity occupieth in human experience as large a field as prosperity, and when it comes sheds a gloomy twilight over all our remaining enjoyments. And it is most true, that if a man came into the world naked, and hath had his soul filled with all affections, and his house with all riches, he hath gradually to part with them one after another,—with friends, with pleasures, with entertainments, and with whatever life contains, and to depart out of it naked as he entered it at first. These things are true, and are not to be over-

looked in a discourse of this kind, which would make it manifest that God in all His acts acteth the Father; and that we in all our prayers should make our approach to Him as a Father.

And perhaps in these dispensations of seeming ill, His fatherly care of us shineth more conspicuously forth than in the former dispensations of seeming good. But in the first place it must be distinctly known and acknowledged by us, that these dispensations of evil, wherewith the estate of man doth now abound, were not brought unto us by the will of God, but against His will, by the wilful disobedience of man. The Lord's commandment was, that man should abstain from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and live ignorant of that fatal distinction, conscious only of the undivided occupation of his faculties with works of holiness, whose end is the glory of God, and blessedness to the creature who performeth them. But now that man by his wickedness hath let sin in to ravage the garden of his blessedness and exile him thence for ever, it hath pleased God to turn these disasters to our favour, and make them profitable to our recovery,—to use them as corrections of our frowardness, in order to bring us unto Himself, and finally to deliver us from all suffering. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son that he receiveth." "It hath pleased the Father through much tribulation to give you the kingdom." "The sufferings of this present life, which are but for a moment, do work out an exceeding weight of glory." "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, for the trial of your faith worketh patience; and let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect, lacking nothing." But this, say you, doth not change the painfulness, the woefulness, of these sad experiences of our life. But I answer, it doth. Doth it not widely differ that a wise Father should correct our faults with a loving look to our future well-being, than that an angry man should smite us in passion for them, or that a judge in justice visit us with the stern issues of the law? And doth not a wise son look back upon these parental acts of chastisement as the most clear demonstration and most wholesome exercise of a father's true love of him? And doth

not a wise parent feel it to be a far higher act of fatherly duty to take a rod and chastise his child, than to smile upon it and caress it? The one is an instinct of love,—the other is a deliberate resolve of love; the one is from the surface of the heart, its natural overflowing,—the other is a draught of affection from the depths of the heart, which it costeth the heart much to give up.

Therefore, every man who receiveth the revelations of God, —and it is such only who are desired to address God by the endearing title, "Our Father,"—every disciple of Christ can look upon His adverse dispensations and say, These are high manifestations of my heavenly Father's love. If his children be taken hastily away from him, he can say, But the little one was not removed in darkness, for previously the Lord had permitted him to be washed from his sins in the baptismal fountain, and had taken for the little spirit such an affection as to be called its Father, its Saviour, and its Sanctifier; and even though the holy sacrament of absolution was not bestowed upon the child before death had seized it, yet, sure I am, that His grace, which dependeth not on any ceremony nor waiteth for any time, will not be denied the little unbaptized infant, who would have been welcome had it been spared, welcome at any time and at all times, to the sacred fountain. Therefore, though this affection knows not where to find its dear object, now wrapped in the sleep of death ere its heart could conceive the grace of God in Christ, yet loath, very loath shall I be to believe otherwise than that it is removed to the arms of a better Parent from the evils to come, and hath been greatly amended by the change. And if my friends or dear relatives have been removed away from me, while my soul yet partook of their affection, I will not be wroth with the dispensations of God towards them, because they were not taken from this sin-invaded and sin-wasted world until previously a wider door of entrance had been opened to them into the untroubled abode of His beloved presence. And for myself, though I am afflicted and go about weeping, I know assuredly that it is good for me to be afflicted; for though affliction for the present be not joyous but grievous, it worketh out the peaceable fruits of righteous-

ness to them that are exercised therewith. And if our goods be snatched away from us, then we know of those good things which cannot be removed; and if our health, we have in our heart the fountain of salvation; and if heart and flesh should faint and fail, God is the strength of our heart and our portion for ever. Yea, and as the Psalmist doth sing, when he was deserted of father and mother and familiar friends, and left as a pelican in the wilderness, or a sparrow upon the house-top alone,—when by reason of the voice of his groaning his bones clave to his skin,—when he had eaten ashes like bread, and mingled his drink with his weeping, because of the indignation of the Lord who had lifted him up and cast him down;—as the Psalmist doth take his comfort in these words, "But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever, and thy remembrance unto all generations. Thou wilt regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did God behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner, and loose them that are appointed unto death:" so can the Christian say when he is reduced to poverty, But my Lord blesseth the poor; and when he hath been brought to emptiness, But my Lord blesseth the hungry; and when he is forced to weep, But my Lord blesseth those that weep; and when he is persecuted and evil spoken of for righteousness' sake, But my Lord blesseth those who are evil-entreated for His name's sake, and calleth upon them to be glad therefore, and to rejoice exceedingly in that day. Therefore I will rejoice, for they cannot remove my poverty of spirit, which is the kingdom of heaven, and my meekness, which is the constant inheritance of the earth; and my mercy, which is my pledge of everlasting mercy; and my pureness of spirit, which is the constant sight of God; and my peace-making and charitable spirit, which insure me of being a child of God. They can remove none of those spiritual riches in which my heart is, or deprive me of those mansions of glory which my Lord hath prepared, or those precious gifts I am receiving, showered down from those cloudy dispensations in which I am glad and rejoice as much as did Elias and the people of Israel in the little cloud

which brought rain to the land when it had been parched and chapped with three years of continuous drought.

Thus it is that the Lord, by revealing the doctrine of a wise and merciful providence, as well as of a beneficent and bountiful creation, hath taken the poison out of the cup of affliction, and converted its bitterness into the most wholesome medicine of the soul. So that His people feel truly as much indebted and beholden to Him for their trials as for their gifts, knowing that the trial of their faith worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, through the love of God shed abroad in their hearts. They know, moreover, that God doth not willingly afflict the children of men, but as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. Gifts corrupt men, and much prosperity is their ruin. As we grow rich, we generally grow wanton; as we grow great, we generally grow proud; as we grow in favour with men, we grow vain and ostentatious; and growth in the favour of God is often not unattended with spiritual pride. Lest by the multitude of his revelations Paul should be lifted up, the Lord gave him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to buffet him. Ah! it is true we are of such an unstable mood that the outgoings of our Father's love are cramped. The mild effusions of His unaltered and unalterable tenderness our present condition cannot bear, even though this dejected and distant dwelling-place of man could hold them. What could the best of fathers do amidst such a family as David's, but either clothe his countenance with austerity, or else retire from their rebellion and weep the woes of a broken heart? And what were better for the family—that its father should retire from constraining its rebellious moods, and let it run into all excesses, and riot in headlong wickedness, or that he should timeously interfere with wise counsel and wholesome discipline? No more can the family of Adam, even of the second Adam, bear that God should always act the tender and loving Father: He needs to hide the light of His countenance, and to break in with acts of mastery to keep us under. The earth was not built for a seat of discord or lamentation; and correction is not known

by the children in heaven when the Lamb that is in the midst of them doth lead them by rivers of living waters, and doth wipe all tears from their eyes. But since to this we have fallen, God hath been gracious enough to accommodate Himself to our conditions. But if we were able to bear with His indulgence, then would His showering benefits know no stint nor sudden alterations as at present. Our afflictions are a new evidence of His fatherhood, another form and expression of His love.

But such is the fatherly affection of God to the children of men, with whom His delights have been from everlasting, that it was not content with creating all things very good, and making man lord of the goodly frame which He had made; and when man had brought upon himself evil and sorrow, it was not content with changing the face of the dispensation from this judgment into fatherly providence,—but, at once to abolish death, and bring sorrow to an end, and redeem the soul of man into the enjoyment once more of an unfallen creature, and of His own ineffable blessedness, He spared not His own Son, but gave Him up to the death for us all. If any one doubt of God's fatherly love to man, let him come hither and behold the high mystery of the incarnation and atonement of the everlasting Son of God, wherein He consented to abolish for a season this love which had no beginning and hath no measure, and called upon His sword to arm and smite the man of His right hand, in order that the children of Adam might be brought near and reconciled to His love. All that temporary suspension of powerfulest affection, that putting of His Only-begotten to grief, that hiding of His countenance and desertion of Him with whom His delights were before the foundation of the world, is but the expression and estimate of this love which He bore unto the sons of men. And this ascendeth beyond all measurable limits into the sublime regions of Divine fatherhood. It passeth the love of angels, and surpasseth the burning love of seraphs, and ascendeth into the mysterious recesses of the Eternal's affection to the Eternal's everlasting Son. In the high mystery of this unknown emotion, your souls being rapt, then say unto your

soul, This, even this and no less, is God's affection, is God's fatherhood, to a fallen world. There is in this simple and solitary act of surrender more displayed of fatherly solicitude in our world's well-being than if He had made an end at once of all distressing providences, and restored the world to Eden's first bloom. In this veiling of the glory which never was created, and reduction into narrowest limits of Him who created the multitudinous universe, and transition of God's bright image into mortal form and feature, and of God's blessedness unto earth's most mean and sorrowful estate, is figured forth the Divine parental tenderness more than in the creating of a thousand replenished and infallible worlds. Such, such is the fatherhood of God,—an incomprehensible mystery of love—which hath no measure nor similitude upon the earth.

But how is all this enhanced if we consider the objects upon whom it was bestowed,—their unworthiness, their ingratitude, their insensibility? Being in distress, had we called upon Him and earnestly besought Him for aid? No; we were in arms against Him. Being solicited with His love, did we receive His gracious overtures? No; we scorned His messages of grace, and put His messengers to death, and crucified His only-begotten Son. His commandments we trampled under foot, and His authority we set at naught. And the aggravation of our wickedness is only to be surpassed by that which surpasseth all dominion of His fatherly love, whereof the length, and the breadth, and the height, and the depth, pass understanding.

XII.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. VI. 9.

Our Father.

OUR Father in heaven, perceiving the disaffection and alienation of His children, notwithstanding all His gifts of creation, and blessings of providence, was moved with pity by those very acts of dishonour and disobedience which would have roused an earthly parent to wrath and indignation, and perceiving that the broken peace of the family, their mutual wounds and sufferings, and their common ruin could never be arrested until they should submit to the sweet influences of His parental government, He did at the very time they were rebels against Him bring into operation His grand device of mercy and love, whereby the children might be restored to their inheritance and receive the adoption of sons; and thus displayed another proof of his fatherhood far more stupendous than those concerning which we have already discoursed. He had sent messenger after messenger to the world, to whom they would not give an ear; He had made His arm bare in the midst of His children, and given them strokes of His chastisement; but He would not altogether remove His love away from them. He made Himself a tabernacle amongst men, a most holy place where He would abide and give oracles to the earth; and He chose a people to be the keepers of His law and testimony, and save it from the ungodly nations. But even His chosen people turned against Him, and the nations profited not by their ministry. Prophet arose after prophet to make known overtures of grace to the penitent, burdens oftener to the impenitent, but it availed not. The earth held on its rebellious course, departed from

its Creator and Preserver, cast off the honour of His heavenly alliance, bowed down to stocks and stones and brutal creatures, defiled and commingled their being, abused their power and might to their mutual misery and ruin. And still the Lord sent them rain, and sunshine, and fruitful seasons, and maintained with them terms of faith and repentance; but it availed not, they would not have Him to reign over them, and cast His laws behind their back, and trampled his statutes under their feet.

Then it was that He brought into visible manifestation that great work of our readoption into His household which from the fall He had given the world to expect, and with a view to which He had been preparing the way in all His other revelations. For it is carefully to be observed that the Lord did not leave Himself at any time without a witness in the minds and hearts of men, but from the first made them acquainted with His purposes of grace, and continued to make them known in what measure the ear of man could hear and apprehend them. The world was never without the light of revelation in many quarters, and would not have been without it in any quarter had they not made a darkness around them which it could not pierce,—a gross darkness which would not admit the beams of light. Even as at present, when the full sun of the gospel hath arisen upon the western nations of the world, there be whole countries which have covered themselves with a darkness which it cannot pierce; and amongst ourselves, where it shineth, if it anywhere ever shone, there be classes of the people, both high and low, who contrive by various sensual and worldly veils to hide it from their sight, and so to perish, from loving darkness rather than light: so in times of dimmer revelation it fared also with the nations of the earth, though the Lord was constantly presenting to them such a vision as might have delivered them from their idolatrous and barbarous condition.

But at length, when Jew and Gentile were equally concluded to be under sin, and when the whole world was guilty before God,—when they had all gone out of the way and become unprofitable together, and there was none that did good, no, not one,—their throats an open sepulchre, their

tongues using deceit, the poison of asps under their lips, their mouth full of cursing and bitterness, their feet swift to shed blood, destruction and misery in their ways, the way of peace utterly unknown to them, and no fear of God before their eyes;—even in such a condition of His children the Lord made known to them the revelation of the gospel, offering His Son as the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and through Him purposing to unite all things in one, whether they be things in heaven or in earth, Jew or Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, to bring them into one by breaking down every partition which divided men asunder, and preaching peace by Jesus Christ to those who were near and to those who were afar off, sending the gospel of reconciliation to every creature under heaven.

Now, that you may in some measure appreciate the value of this gift of Divine love and fatherhood unto the children of men, I pray you to consider the greatness of the surrender of the only-begotten Son, whom the Father did not spare, but delivered Him up to the death for us all, it is written that He was in the beginning with God, and that He was God; and by the mouth of the prophet He speaketh of Himself in this wise: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." And thus God speaketh concerning him: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." And again: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." And again: "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." And again: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And in the days of His flesh Jesus prayed, "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." And He prayed that His disciples might be one as He was one with the Father; and "that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them." The nearness and dearness, the oneness of this relation between the Father and the Son ascendeth beyond all measurable limits into the excesses of the Divine

fatherhood. It passeth the love of angels, and even passeth the burning love of seraphim, and ascendeth into the mysterious excesses of the Eternal's affection to the Eternal's everlasting Son. Now if any one doubt of God's fatherly love to man, let him come hither and behold the high mystery of the incarnation, the humiliation, and the death of this uncreated object of Jehovah's love;—that for the love He bore the children of men, that they might not die but have life everlasting, He spared not His dear Son, but laid His hand heavy upon Him, and with His reproach did break His heart. Mystery of mysteries! mystery of love! the everlasting Father suspend the everlasting Son of His affection, and draw His sword to smite the man of His right hand, in order to recover children who were corrupted, rebellious, and buried in transgression! But true it is that this powerfullest affection in the bosom of God was suspended for a while, and His Only-begotten was put to grief, and His Father's countenance was hidden from Him, and He was forsaken of His God, out of love to the sons of men, that they might not perish but have everlasting life. If you say, How great is His love! I say, consider the mystery of this fountain of love from which all love in creation hath flowed; and be it known unto you and most surely believed amongst you, that the same fountain of love was quenched for a season in other outgoings that it might overflow in one mighty stream upon the sons of men. What love the Father hath to His Son, that is the measure of God's affection, of God's fatherhood, to a fallen world. This surrender is a greater proof of His solicitude in the world's well-being than if He had made an end at once of all distressing providences, and restored the world to Eden's first bloom. Yea, I will declare more, and say, that in this veiling of the glory which never was created, in this reduction into creature conditions of Him who created the multitudinous universe, is figured forth the parental regards of God more clearly than if He had created for our possession and delight not one, but a thousand replenished and infallible worlds. In the one case there is an exhibition of that power which we know to be unwearied in producing and reproducing; but in that whereof I speak there is a voluntary dismemberment for a time of that

union which had never been created, and a putting to silence of that creating Word which spake the worlds into existence, and which by its truth upholdeth the stability of their being. Oh, the height and the depth, the length and the breadth, of the love of God in Christ Jesus!—it passeth knowledge!

All this was undertaken and undergone in order to make peace by the blood of His cross, and reconcile us unto God, and open up a new and living way of love and liberty into the holiest of all, to which heretofore there had been only a way of fear. It was to destroy the enmity which was between us, and restore confidence in their heavenly Father to the conscience-stricken children. Law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ. Hitherto, men had, under the sense of their sinfulness, sought to propitiate the favour of God by every costly sacrifice and painful observance, being conscious that God, as a God of holiness and justice, could not look upon the workers of iniquity but with detestation and abhorrence. They crouched in timorous devotion at their shrines; they subjected themselves to severe mortifications of body and of spirit; they deprecated with strong cries the offended deities; with clouds of incense they filled their temples, and upon the altars they made the blood of costly sacrifices to bleed. And even the children of Israel knew Him only as their King and Lawgiver, yielding to Him the subjection of servants and the fealty of subjects, for law came by Moses. But no one knew of the grace and truth and fatherly love which was in the bosom of the Creator until Christ came and revealed it, and by the one offering of Himself brought all sacrifices to an end. To them that believe gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on His name. It is not, brethren, that there is anything magical in this word "believe" which changes the nature of things and the character of men; but that in the truths revealed by Christ unto the faith of men, there is now brought into the nature of God and His purposes what cannot be obtained from intellectual speculation or worldly experience, but enters into the soul by faith only; so that he who hath truly believed this new doctrine and information concerning things spiritual and divine, hath thereby obtained the key

to the secrets of the Almighty's nature, government, and intention, and of the relations of his own spirit to the great Father of spirits. Suppose a man hath served you in the capacity of a hired servant with uncommon fidelity, and that by some means both you and he come into the possession of documents proving him to be your long-lost and much-desired son,—how instantly and how effectually will that change the nature of your alliance, and how changed in spirit is everything which he now doth for your sake, how tender and full of affection!—and servile fear is cast out by filial love, and the joyful, hopeful activity of the son and heir casts out the unwilling service of the hireling. That simple discovery, though it adds not to the amount of the work which he does, but, perhaps, takes from it, doth at once inspire him with another and a nobler set of feelings, so that he becomes speedily a new creature in the interest he takes in your affairs, and the love he bears to your household. So it is with one who, from being a legal servant, becomes a loving child of God, by believing the revelation of Jesus Christ concerning His heavenly Father. Before this revelation, he had not known and could not take to heart the interest the Almighty has in such a worm of the earth; and what service he did give was yielded under fearful apprehension, and did but strengthen the principle of fear out of which it was given, and increase the distance in which they stood to one another. But when Christ cometh in the brightness of His glory, and is not ashamed to call us His brethren, and forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He himself also took part of the same, then we know that His Father is our Father; and though high and infinitely exalted, He is also of great grace and condescension; and though most terrible in His judgments, is of infinite affection even to the rebellious, and wisheth them to return, and inherit the blessings of His house; and will not be served with formality and fear, but with a loving and an overflowing heart. Those who believe not, or know not the foundation of Christ crucified, are constrained to adopt a foundation of their own upon which they may raise the superstructure of slavish and fearful observance, but upon which the superstructure of filial

reverence and love can never arise. To be in earnest belief and application of the truths which Christ hath brought to light touching heaven, redemption, and Divine reconciliation, is the only way of being brought into communion of spirit with the Father of our spirits. The entering in of these truths, the taking of them into our homes and our bosoms, casteth out the ancient notions, and during the struggle there is the trouble, and fear, and excitement of conviction and conversion; after they have obtained the throne of the soul, they bring the perpetual peace and joy of the adopted children of God.

Such is the power and tendency of Christ's incarnation, humiliation, and death, to draw us near to the love of our heavenly Father from that timorous distance at which we now stand; but there is a power not less in what followed His death to work out and perfect the same all-gracious work of our adoption. His incarnation and death purchased our redemption, and when He ascended up on high, He received gifts for men, even for the rebellious. These gifts, which He purchased by His death, He did not scatter abroad in wide difference and wild disorder, but gave them to the administration of the Holy Spirit. That Spirit of comfort and of truth is an omnipresence upon the earth, constantly dealing with those souls which have received the testimony of the Word of God, and bringing to them the supplies of those gifts which their Redeemer purchased for their sakes. Whosoever, therefore, giveth ear to the Word of God, which is Christ, shall have monitions of the Holy Spirit; which if he regard, he shall also have operations of the same Holy Spirit, until he be "changed in the spirit of his mind, and be renewed in the image of God, which is created in righteousness and true holiness." The knowledge opens the way, and the Spirit leads us in the way; the knowledge disabuseth us of the error, and the Spirit watcheth over the seed of truth until it growcth into a stately tree. The Son made known the grace and truth of the Father to the reason of man, but the Spirit witnesseth with our spirit that we are the sons of God. The Son took all instruments to persuade the world of peace, by publishing the gospel of good-will and peace, but the

Spirit of His Son within our hearts crieth, "Abba, Father." This witness of the Divine Spirit in the souls of believers—which is called in Scripture the "earnest of the Spirit," the "seal of the Holy Spirit with which we are sealed until the day of redemption"—is not to be mistaken for those wild and unspiritual doctrines diffused among the credulous vulgar concerning sensible impressions of the Divinity, by which they are suddenly taken, and held in a divine ravishment for a season. Such things have been for great ends given unto men, as to the two disciples, James and Peter, upon the mount of transfiguration, and to Paul in his vision, that they might make assurance doubly sure to these much-tried saints, and be to their souls as a sure anchor in the midst of their terrible vicissitudes. And I say not that when it is the Almighty's purposes greatly to try some of His children, He may not bestow upon them, in vision or otherwise, some extraordinary sign of His favour, in order to carry them through this extreme trial, with which, for the gospel's sake, He is to try them. And of such a thing, if it have occurred, the favoured saint will be little careful to make mention to a disbelieving and mocking generation. But for those sensible conversions and sensible communions, concerning which so much is written and spoken amongst the ignorant, they grow out of superstition,—they subject the spiritual to the sensible,—rest all religious trust upon a bodily feeling and a momentary instinct,—breed the longing desire after similar sensible signs,—destroy the evidence of faith and love and new obedience, and the other fruits of the Spirit, and make a religion inherent in the sense, the lowest, the basest, and most degrading of all superstitions. This sensible form of faith is kept up by the foolish notion with which ignorant men are possessed, that the further they can remove things from the ordinary course, the more they throw them into the immediate hands of God; as if a common thing was, by its commonness, separated from the Divine Providence, which must be read only in things extraordinary;—which is to destroy Providence, and to make religion vain as a principle ever present, ever felt, the food and element of a new life. Amongst the fruits of the Spirit so often commended in Scripture, I find peace, joy, long-suffering,

gentleness, patience, meekness, temperance, love, and truth, and a sound mind; but I find neither tremblings, nor pains, nor cold shiverings, nor horrors, nor long sleeps and entrancements, nor any of those sensible visitations concerning which they circulate such wild accounts. This witness of the Spirit that we are the sons of God consists in spiritual, not in sensible or intellectual effects, and is possessed by those who feel their fears waning and their love growing apace—towards Christ a brother's affection, towards the Father the obedience and dependence of a child, and towards the Spirit the consolation and joy which the growing communion of truth begetteth within the soul. Such a one hath the witness of God's Spirit to his being a child of God, when his consciousness of his Father's love ariseth to such a pitch as to banish all his apprehensions, and leave him filled with the single emotion of his Father's love, out of which come a thousand acts of willing duty, and the desire to discharge ten thousand more; when, with all his imperfections around him, he knows and feels that he is accepted for his Saviour's sake, and can even glory in his infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon him; when he feareth not to suffer for every transgression, but to be forgiven and assisted in a better way,—seeth great transgressions on every side, and confesseth them with a humble heart, yet in that sight and confession of sin hath more hope than he formerly had in the false notion of his own moral worth and ceremonial cleanness. He hath the witness of the Divine Spirit within him, when all debates concerning his calling and election have ceased, through the assurance that his peace is made by the cross of Christ and his hopes made for ever sure. And moments do occur to such a patient persevering disciple of the gospel of Christ, wherein his soul masters all its natural unbelief, and struggles above the deep waters of its corruption, and rejoiceth in God its Saviour, and unbosoms itself in unrestrained expressions of attachment and devotion to its Father in heaven. They occur unto the hungry and thirsty soul like the visions and inspirations of ancient seers, to tell of an immediate connexion with the Godhead, a spiritual alliance with the great source and fountain of spiritual existence, which may comfort its many penitences

and reward its many prayers. There are moments of such unhindered communion given to comfort us under some sterner trials, and lift us to some nobler performances, which stand out bright as that moment when the day dawned and the day-star arose upon our hearts. We are not doomed to eternal gloom, as the world misjudgeth, but we live in a constant light, and the light of our spiritual enjoyment often bursteth out more brightly when we have moments of sweet composure and spiritual possession, — revelations of high thought,—silent contemplation of things which we cannot and care not to utter,—strong assurances of the Spirit, which tell us of what better things we shall yet behold, and what brighter times await us; just as, upon the other hand, men of the world, amidst their wealthiest and joyfullest seasons, have moments of deep disquietude and agonising pain, which warn them of the inexorable doom to which they are hastening their souls.

Thus do we become the children of God, by the revelation of His Word and Spirit unto our souls: being taken from the family of the first Adam, we are joined to the family of the second Adam, made heirs with Him of the promises; and we feel a growing resemblance unto our crucified and risen Lord, we are crucified with Him in our affections and lusts, and our other members which are upon the earth, and with Him we rise to newness of life. Out of the corruption of our natural ruin the seeds of our immortality spring, whose fruit is holiness of heart, and a divine contentedness with the ways of Providence,—yea, a joy in trouble, and a prosperity in adversity, and a triumph over death and the grave, and the hope of an abundant entrance into the joy of our Lord. "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as he is,"—as He is seated at the right hand of God, with honour and glory, and all power in heaven and earth reposed on His almighty head. We are fallen creatures no longer, but creatures risen again to the fellowship of heaven,—aliens no longer from His house, but admitted to all its present privileges and future hopes,—heirs no longer of our Father's

wrath, but heirs of all His good gifts and better promises,—no longer blind worms of the earth, but bright heirs of immortality. And Christ prayeth for us that we may be possessed of that glory which He had with His Father before the world was, that we may be one with Him as He is one with the Father, and that we may reign with Him, and be presented in the presence of His Father with exceeding joy.

Here then, brethren, is a subject for your contemplation. Christ hath set the seal of His Spirit upon men, and taken from them a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, whom He hath introduced into the adoption of His children, into whose spirit He hath infused the rich inspirations of His own blessed Spirit, with whom He is sharing His victories over evil, and the earthly rewards of His victories, and is soon to share the full enjoyment of His heavenly kingdom; which is a distinction that by its very excess seemeth mysterious. It seems hardly credible that upon beings so like ourselves in all respects such an adoption should have passed, and such a testament of gifts be in reserve. We can hardly persuade ourselves that there can be such a difference, while all other things remain so much alike. We eat the same food of toil and carefulness, and are subject to the same infirmities of flesh and blood, and yet one part of us are the children of God and the heirs of life, the other the children of the devil and the heirs of wrath. We seem to want more perceptible testimonials than the silent progress of the new man within us—something which can be felt to be overpowering, and pointed at as irresistible; and hence the wonderful narratives of sensible conversions find such a ready ear. But there is not any need of such extraordinary assurances. No man, looking upon our Saviour's person, we suppose, would have said that it embodied the Divinity; His external motions were like those of other men,—His privations greater, His sufferings more severe, His life more tried, His end more wretched. It was only when He opened His lips and made known His message full of grace and truth,—when He stretched forth His hand to do acts of unequalled power and goodness, that He was recognised, not by any glorious halo that enshrined His body, but by the

perfect holiness that possessed His soul. And in like manner the rest of the children are denoted, not by anything striking in feature or in fortune, but by the simple presence within their breast of a divine serenity and a constant heavenly zeal.

Such are the revelations of the gospel, in order to enlighten men upon their true relation to God, and win them from their present miserable estate of rebellion against Heaven, back to their place in their Father's love; and such are the several operations of the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—to fit the soul for being reinstated in the paradise of blessedness which it hath lost; and without the faith of these revelations, and the help of these intercessors, I have no doubt that none of you shall ever be reinstated in that blissful estate. When I delineated formerly God's bounty in your creation, and watchful care in providence,—His physician-like administration of wholesome though unpalatable medicines,—His fatherlike dispensation of chastisement to the whole family, it was not in the expectation of being able to prevail by these representations, however full of heart-moving and conscience-striking details, but that I might justify, through all the departments of His government, the fatherhood of God. I did not wish to leave one soul, believer or unbeliever, without a witness within his heart of God's good title to the name of a Father, and of His good right to expect at our hands the obedience of children; that, as all use this prayer, no one might use it without a sense, of a lesser or a higher kind, of the fatherly character of Him whom they approached with the name of Father. But I had no expectation of being able to fix the permanent feeling in any but those who have taken up their right, and sought their adoption, upon the faith of Christ's atonement and intercession. For though others, upon a review of these objections, might be able at a time to feel a rising emotion of filial gratitude and family alliance unto God, yet so intensely are they wedded to some form of present good, some idol of the sense, or the intellect, or the outward visible world, and so volatile is their mind towards things unseen, and so conscious are they when they reflect on their most unfilial ingratitude, most undevout and un-

heavenly state of soul, that the momentary emotion is made to fly before some other feeling more habitual, more powerful, and more welcome. Yet I hope to them it will not be in vain that they have been reminded of these emblems of God's love they are in daily use of; and if they advance not so far as to recognise Him as their chief good and supreme love, they will not speak of His holy majesty lightly, or allow His thrice holy name to be lightly mentioned in their hearing; which truly in a son towards an earthly parent were thought monstrous.

But be it surely known unto you, and most surely believed amongst you, that, let God manifest Himself as liberally as He may to one who has not seen the beauty of Christ, and the necessity of His salvation, such a one will not be translated into the feeling of true affection towards God, or possessed with the sense of perfect security of His love and favour. Providence may shower down its utmost bounties, and prosperity bring its best success, and nature bestow its kindest temperament, and crown him with the largest, most comprehensive intellect, but all will not avail to put into the bosom any feeling towards God kindred to the feeling of a dutiful son unto his parent,—will not cause God to be thought upon or to be had in remembrance as He is by the most unendowed peasant who has been reformed by the word and anointed with the Spirit of God. My experience has most surely revealed it to me as a fact, that there is no general emotion of filial affection towards God emanating, as it were of its own accord, out of a highly-gifted mind, or a richly-endowed inheritance. I do not say that naturally there will be no thought of God; there may be a reverence of His name, a regard to His ordinances, a religious pity of the poor, a liberal devotion of means to their relief, an upholding of the decent face and form of religion, and no small acquaintance with its doctrines and its duties; yea, and there may be a more complete routine of service, a severer ritual and a heavier sense of responsibility, all without once generating the tender glow of attachment, the constant warmth of love, the living, breathing affection which is entitled to the name of filial, and to which the sacred title, "Our Father," properly respondeth.

Many a servant toils harder for his master than all his sons, but he is not therefore a son. No more doth the amount of performance constitute a child of God; but the spirit which breathes over it, the devotion and heartiness with which it is performed. Which abiding feeling, I again declare, no one is adequate to catch out of nature's fairest forms or the heart's most generous moods. It is the production, the holy fruit and most abundant reward of faith in those doctrines of the blessed evangel which have been set forth above. And whoever is conscious of being still a novice in the divine household, or strange to its divine liberty of love, must seek his birthright from the hand of his Redeemer, who hath purchased it, and be instructed in the privileges and duties of his Father's house by the Spirit which his Redeemer sent abroad over the earth, and now sendeth over the earth to win the children to their home again; of which Spirit I am a poor, weak, and inefficient minister. Else, were I endowed with any inward might, or if your hearts were not harder than the nether millstone, I would this day have found some once strayed sheep to bring back with me to the fold, over whom the angels of God might strike their harps to a joyful strain; for I have touched the most soul-subduing, soul-converting weapons of our faith, but handled them most imperfectly. Oh, brethren, why should you exclude yourselves from the closest alliance with Heaven, and the most plentiful participation of Heaven's gifts?

XIII.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. VI. 9.

Which art in heaven.

TO the tender name of God as our Father is added His dwelling-place, "which art in heaven," in order to teach us, that when we pray to Him our souls should pass into that state of holiness and truth of which heaven is the sure abode; that we should not only lift up our eyes and look upon the azure vault, which is the type of the infinite and the invisible, but that the eye of the soul should look from the earthly region of practical prudence into the heavenly regions of spiritual hope and desire, seeking after the unattained conditions of excellence, and longing for the time and place when they shall be realised and possessed. At the time we pray, God is not far from any one of us, though we address Him as dwelling in the heavens. We do not need to ascend to the tops of mountains, like the priests of Baal, nor to seek Him in the deep silence and seclusion of woods, like the priests of our fathers, for in Him we live and move and have our being. Nevertheless, we are commanded when we pray, to say, "Our Father, which art in heaven," to signify to us continually that He is not to be found in any earthly or in any hellish mood of our soul, but only in the heavenly,—that is, in the holy and pure and charitable and true. Hence the soul is taught to purge herself of all malice and wickedness when she nameth the name of God, because He dwelleth in the pure heavens of her blessedness, and to hold herself above the humours and follies and low pursuits of the earth with which the Lord hath

no fellowship or communion, except to reprove and restrain them; that she must dwell in her heaven, if she would hold communion with God, who dwelleth in His heaven; that she must be girt about with her best and holiest attributes, if she would have access to the pure and holy abode of Him whom she seeketh. And though she knows God is at hand and not afar off, she must address herself as to a high undertaking when she prayeth to Him, having to pass out of worldly busy occupations into the higher region of spiritual feeling and desire.

It is written in the Psalms that the heavens are God's throne, and the earth is His footstool; and by the prophet Nahum it is added, that the clouds are the dust of His feet. And Solomon, in his dedication of the temple, addresseth Jehovah as dwelling in the heavens: "Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place." And when He regardeth men, He is said to look down from heaven upon the children of men; and when He visits them, He is said to bow the heavens and come down. And in this Christian prayer our Lord and Saviour hath adopted the same form of language, and said, "Our Father, which art in heaven."

Nevertheless, by Solomon, in the same dedication of the temple, it is declared that the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. And the Psalmist also hath given his testimony to the ubiquity and omnipresence of God in these sublime verses: "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." And Paul, in his apology before the Areopagus, hath said that He is not far from any one of us, seeing in Him we live and move and have our being. And our Lord, of that Father whom we pray to as in the heavens, testifieth in another place thus, "If a man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him;" which Jehovah himself hath thus confirmed: "I am the high and the holy One who inhabiteth the praises of eternity; whose name is Holy, and who dwelleth in the holy place; yet with him also who is of

a humble and a contrite spirit, and who trembleth at my word." What, then, meaneth it to pray to our Father, as we are here directed, as dwelling in the heavens, if so be that His presence is diffused everywhere abroad, and that even from hell He is not debarred by all the wickedness which abideth there? And where is that heaven to which we are directed to look up when we make our prayers, and from which, in a good time, we are taught to expect an answer in peace? To these questions I shall now, by the blessing of God, endeavour to render an answer; while I explain the kind adaptation to human nature which there is in this form of speech, and the many emblematical meanings which it bears to the mind of the suppliant.

Men are so conscious themselves of the pollutions which defile the earth, and of the enormities which are transacted in its various corners, that in all their superstitions, even the most rude and barbarous, they have placed the habitations of their good deities away from its confused noise and unresting wickedness; while they have quartered their evil deities in the bowels of the earth, compressing them down to work their devilish works in the centre of that wicked orb, on the outside of which so much wickedness is transacted; and when they would do their worship to the gods above, they chose the elevation of more high places and the deep silence of groves to bring them more near to their habitation. The heavens—from the pure light with which they arefilled by day, and the vast magnificence with which they are overspread by night, from the manifold motion of the sun and moon and stars, all accomplished in silence and beauty, and from the boundless extent of the blue expanse to which the sense and the imagination in vain seek to find a limit—have become to all people the emblem of those higher and nobler ideas which the soul conceives concerning purity and peacefulness, order, and justice, and righteousness. And if these ideas have anywhere a reality, a local habitation and a name, the soul conceives it must be somewhere within the compass of the azure serene, where all looks so lovely and peaceful. Hither, therefore, she removes the better deities, which are the personifications and patrons of those more excellent things which the soul conceives within herself, but nowhere finds exempli-

fied upon the earth. Moreover, the earth is so dependent upon the heavens, and the heavens so masterful over the earth, bestowing upon her light and heat and fruitful influences, or laying her waste with whirlwind and storm; splitting her bulwarks with the lightning and the thunderbolt, or with the earthquake making her to shudder to her very centre, that the imagination of man hath placed in the regions above, the dwelling-place of all that is mighty and powerful, as well as of all that is just, orderly, and good.

The heavens being thus to all nations, in all ages, the emblem of harmony and beauty, of peace and quietness, of vastness and infinity, and being, from their very nature, likely to continue the proper contrast to the disorder and jarring confusion of the earth, it hath pleased the Lord, in His revelation, to accommodate Himself to this condition of human thought, and represent Himself as having His throne and proper dwelling-place in the heavens, thereby encouraging men to follow after those ideas which are higher and nobler than the earth, and constituting Himself patron of every high and saintly desire of the soul. I dwell, saith He, in that place with which all your better thoughts are associated; and you dwell nearer to my presence according as you surpass the earth, and have your hopes and desires upon the things above. You cannot come near me by being earthly; but by being heavenly in your thoughts you can come near to mine abode: whence, if you have lived in earthiness, you shall, after death, be debarred, and thrust down to the lower parts of the earth; but if you have loved the higher aspirations, and sought the holier occupations of the soul, you shall be disrobed from earthly vestments, and translated from earthly habitations to my own spiritual and blessed habitations.

Now, it is to be observed that, in thus taking to Himself a local habitation, Jehovah did not knowingly deceive men into the idea of His limited presence; for He at the same time taught them that He was everywhere, on the earth and in the lowest depths of hell—upon the earth, beholding the evil and the good, making the wrath of men to praise Him, and restraining the remainder of wrath; in hell, holding the devils by His stern right hand from bursting abroad, and by

the manifestation of His justice making them to believe and tremble. But He signified that heaven was His home, the abiding place of His presence, the seat of His glorious majesty, into whose gates nothing entereth that defileth or maketh a lie, where are fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore; and thus He did accommodate Himself to the previous conditions of the human soul, and patronise what superterrestrial thoughts dwelt amongst them, without abusing their minds by misrepresentation, or falsifying their conduct by error.

Any one who is at all acquainted with the human spirit must know how helpful, if not necessary, to all its thoughts of outward things is the idea of place. It is the nature of a limited creature to conceive all things in some place. Hence the metaphysicians have said that space is the form of all our outward, and time the form of all our inward ideas. But be this as it may, things seem but dreams or fancies until we have got them associated with place, and also with person. Justice, for example, though an idea common to the human kind, is of little or no service until it becomes personified and placed in the lawgiver and the judge, in the tribunals and the awful seats of justice. Taste, also, though more delicate and shadowy, must be personified and placed in the works of the fine arts, in the ornaments of the person, and the beautifying of nature. Power and dignity also must have their outward form in the emblems and attributes of magistracy, and their dwelling-place in the palaces and thrones of kings; and mercy also hath her dwelling-place by the side of power, and her emblem in the sceptre of power. And in all things we may claim and assert it to be of the nature of man, not a weakness, but in some sort a necessity, thus to give a local habitation and a name to his most spiritual conceptions; for otherwise he could not make them known to others, and but indistinctly conceive them to himself. Our speech to one another is a revelation by emblems of those invisible thoughts and immaterial feelings which are passing within us. The thought is not here, neither is it there; but by putting it into words, we have, by the help of things here and there, given it a manifestation unto others. This is poetry, to make the

emotions of the spirit manifest; and he is the greatest poet who maketh the greatest number of high and noble emotions most distinctly manifest. Now, we represent ourselves by the finest and best aspects of things upon the earth: woman's beauty by the flowers of the field, and childhood's innocence by the lamb, the gentlest of the creatures which move upon the earth, and the dove, the most harmless of the fowls of heaven; man's fortitude and strength by the oak, the stoutest tree of the field, or the lion, the noblest animal which roams over the wild. The infinite forms of nature, and the infinitely varied impressions which they make upon our senses, are all put into requisition in order to set forth the emotions of our spirit, and make them intelligible to the spirit of another man. But the emotions of the spirit have no resemblance to, nor proper dwelling-place in, these forms of nature, or impressions of the sense, which are not pictures, but only emblems and intermediate things, upon which the attention of the other spirit is arrested, till it examine itself for the kindred emotion which is thus shadowed forth. When I explain the feelings of my soul to another soul, that soul looketh not to my words or images, which would mislead it altogether, but it looks in upon itself to see the effect which these words or images are producing. And if they are producing no effects, nothing is understood; if they are producing effects, then let him shew the effect by his words and natural gestures; and so, by comparing spiritual emotion with spiritual emotion, through the help of sensible visible things, or words which are originally the name of them, we come to understand what is passing within our souls. It is a necessity, therefore, rather than a weakness, which obligeth man to give to his spiritual conceptions "a local habitation and a name." And out of this necessity cometh, among the other wise adaptations of revelation, this one—that the Lord hath a place of abode assigned to Him in the heavens, though He is everywhere, beholding the evil and the good.

We seldom endeavour to apprehend the difficult undertaking which Jehovah undertook when He sought to reveal His infinite and incomprehensible divinity to the sons of men. Science doth a great work when it makes known the appointed

rule and law by which matter shifts its place and changeth its form; and such names as Newton's have thence their glory. Poetry doth a higher work, and serves to this end when it watcheth the emotions and vicissitudes of the soul, and, turning them to forms, giveth "to airy nothing a local habitation and a name." And philosophy, if indeed there is any such, doth the highest work of all, in tracing the law and rule after which these emotions come and go and shift themselves in the theatre of the soul. But theology, or revelation, hath a work infinitely more comprehensive and difficult to perform. For science meddleth but with the visible, and poetry with the invisible of the human spirit; but theology hath the invisible of the Divine Spirit to demonstrate unto man's most limited apprehension—the being and attributes of God, the manner and maxims of His government, the nature of His relation unto us and of our obligations unto Him, the history of our creation, the secrets of our preservation, the way of our redemption, the high mystery of our regeneration, the after-scenes which lie beyond the grave, and the whole condition of the future world;—all these hath theology to reveal in such a manner to the narrow and evil-conditioned soul of man, as that they shall take a hold on it so sure and steadfast as to unclasp the hold which the science of the visible hath obtained over the sense, and to correct and reform the impression which the poetry of the invisible hath made upon the heart and soul. To do this work was above the invention and art of man. It was too high for him; he could not by searching find out God, or know the Almighty unto perfection; and it was a work in which Jehovah himself laboured with slow and gradual skill, through four thousand years training man for its declaration; and after it was declared, training his understanding other two thousand years for its entertainment; and even now the mystery is but partially understood, for still the world is but as it were in the infancy of its understanding, and shall grow as much wiser in the interpretation of God's revelation than we at present are, as we at present judge ourselves to be wiser than the primitive fathers were. And this revelation is made as it were by a system of accommodation; not by exact representations of the things, but by

accommodation of them to the forms of the human spirit. The first dispensation, Paul says, made nothing perfect, but shadowed out the second dispensation to the sense and understanding of a rude age; and our second dispensation hath not yet made things perfect, for we see but as through a glass, dimly, and know but in part, and prophesy but in part; it is a representation by emblems of the true things which are to be hereafter. Hence we have an incarnate Deity as the foundation of the whole, or a revelation of Godhead to the infirmities of manhood; and we have a manifestation of the divine Spirit in the emblem of baptism, and the various attributes of the new man created in righteousness and true holiness; and the revelation of creation and providence under the emblem of the father of a family; and the habitations of the blessed under the emblem of a pure and undefiled city; and the habitations of the cursed under the emblem of a burning fiery lake;—and everything which is revealed is revealed by emblems to the soul, and without an emblem nothing is or can be revealed. It is truth veiled by flesh, for the sake of flesh. It is divine and unalterable truth conformed to the mould of the human soul, yet with the living virtue of expanding the mould into which it is cast, and purifying it, until at length, by the helping hand of death, the mould yawneth and falleth to pieces, and the spirit bursteth out into new fruitfulness, like the plant from the corrupted seed, and enlargeth to a new capacity, whereby it comprehendeth the whole fulness, and partaketh the perfect blessedness, of those things which heretofore it held only by dim shadows and unsatisfying savours, by earnests and pledges, by hope, by the filmy evidence and shadowy substance which faith giveth to things unseen and hoped for.

To speculate upon the locality of these heavens in which Jehovah hath His throne is as idle and unprofitable as it would be to speculate concerning the sceptre with which He rules, or the throne from which He giveth His commandments, or the bodily parts of hands, eyes, ears, and nostrils, which are all given to Him, in accommodation to our faculties, the more generally to take the various parts of our nature, and convert them to good and holy ends. All such speculations

concerning the place of heaven are frivolous, and worse than frivolous, arising out of a misuse of the emblem, and tending to perpetuate and propagate the misuse. These emblems are but shadows of the truth, and when they are taken as the very things they are misused. Had the revelation been for the use of the sense, it would have been presented to the sense, whereas it is given as a place where dwelleth righteousness and devotion and fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore. If sensible forms be given to these spiritual affections, as of harping and singing psalms, it is only for the end of presenting the spiritual affection under the most significant of these earthly forms. All these desires to give a sensible meaning to the emblems of divine revelation come of the tendency of our souls to idolatry. The desire to define the situation and occupations of heaven comes out of the same error of the mind which makes a statue stand for God, or holy water for the unction of the Spirit, or a wafer for the body, and wine for the blood of Christ. The same struggling with the spirit would make the emblem of things unseen, which the spirit lives upon, into sensible realities, and so starve and becloud the spirit, which it would fain overcome.

The soul of man, being too large and noble for the earth, its present dwelling-place, and for the laws and customs and forms of society which are established on the earth, is ever ranging, in its desires of good and speculations of excellence, beyond the bounds of vision and experience; sighing and lamenting over the degradation to which it is doomed, and grieving over the broken and ruined condition which is everywhere around—grieving over its own falls and transgressions and forfeiture of its natural capacities. Which self-convicting, complaining, and penitent moods of the soul it is the aid of the Gospel to encourage; to foster discontent with all practicable or possible enjoyments upon the earth, and to call out those higher aspirations and holier desires which find no entertainment, no home, nor safety upon the earth, but are mocked and trampled under foot by our sensual and worldly nature, and by the sensual and worldly nature of those around us. To save and prosper these, to make them triumphant over all our baser and lower desires, it was neces-

sary to find for them a place to dwell in, to be realised in, a season at which we should come to these enjoyments, and live in the midst of them. For if they have no place or season, they are to me only a shadow and a dream. The world is not their place, nor the present life their season. Therefore, heaven beyond the visible—no fixed star nor planetary orb, which are parts of the visible, but the invisible heavens, which eye hath not seen—was revealed as the seat of these purities and refinements of the soul; and eternity beyond time, the boundless eternity, was appointed to be their season. And as every place must have a ruler and a governor, the Lord made known that He hath established His throne in the heavens. The Son of God called it His Father's house of many mansions, where every believer hath a place prepared for him. And as every hour must have an occupation, the occupations of heaven are set forth by the highest raptures and ravishments whereof the soul is capable in her purest estate, in order that all things being made agreeable to her nature, the emblem might serve her wholly, and work with the more power over her sanctification, which is the great end of the revelation of God.

Now, it is to misunderstand the nature of those emblems to interpret them literally, or endeavour to define them to the sense or natural understanding. They must have a reference to things seen, otherwise they would not be intelligible. But if understood in that sense only, they would profit us nothing; it is the other part, which is not of the visible, for the sake of which the visible emblem is taken, and this is the part to the apprehension of which we are to endeavour to arrive by the ladder of emblems which is let down from heaven for that end.

XIV.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. VI. 9.

Thy kingdom come.

THE preservation and prosperity of Christ's kingdom upon the earth is not due to policy and arms, and the many resources of other kingdoms, but hath come about through the prayers of the saints, and the mighty working of the Spirit of God which follows their prayers,—as entirely as Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, and guidance through the wilderness, came about through the repeated applications of Moses and Aaron at the throne of God. And John, in the Apocalypse, informs us, that an angel presented before the Lord the prayers of the saints, upon which the seven angels that had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound, thereby giving us to know that no greater thing is necessary to set heaven in motion than the prayers of humble and holy men. Their witness and their wish, uttered from various secret corners of the earth, arise like an odour of a sweet-smelling savour before the throne on high, which God tastes with delight and rejoices to reward. The utterances of the hearts of the redeemed are the despatches and chronicles of the Church passing ever and anon to the court of the heavenly King, which He listens to with a delighted ear, and in due season sends down angels to minister unto her needs. The prayers of the saints are, as it were, the exhalations of the soul, which arise and then descend again in showers of divine grace, which are more refreshing and full of fruit than the dew upon the mown grass. Paul was not more a saviour to all that were in the ship, than the saints of God are to all that are in the world; over which, when all the saints shall be gathered out, the consuming fire shall spread desolation, and

shrivel up the pride and grandeur of thrones and dominions and sceptered kings, as the flame of our domestic fire shrivels up and obliterates a paper scroll.

Among our prayers, to which God, in the disposal of His providence and grace, gives such mighty prevalence, there is not any one more fraught with blessing unto mankind than that which is the subject of our present discourse. It embraces, in the compass of three words, the sum total of the world's well-being; for, as God's kingdom comes, Satan's passes, and evil with suffering abates. It leaves nothing out which God governs and patronises. It contains all which He dispenses, every good and perfect gift which cometh down from the Father of lights to His needful children. And, moreover, as God hath given all power on earth into the hands of His blessed Son, our Saviour, it is the welcome of redemption, the salutation of our Redeemer, the all-hail of Christ our King! So mighty a request, and so pregnant with blessings, being so briefly expressed, we are apt to prefer with little consciousness of what our lips are uttering; and being part of that form of prayer which from childhood we have been taught, it hath come with the rest to be formally, not feelingly, uttered. Since ever we can remember, and before the date of memory, we have used it, until in religion the Lord's Prayer hath become what the forms of civility and politeness are in ordinary discourse—said without reflection upon what they signify. Its petitions have almost forgotten to awake emotions in our breast, and it really requires an effort to put life and meaning into that form of words which is perhaps more pregnant with meaning than any other piece of equal extent. Now, when any petition is uttered unto God without a lively sense of our own need, or the need of others in behalf of whom we pray, it is regarded by Him in no other light than an insult; great according to the importance of that which we mutter over with our lips, and make the appearance of requesting from His hand. Therefore, brethren, I shall interrupt the ordinary course of our ministrations, in order to interest you in the progress of that kingdom whose plantation in the earth by its righteous King we have already discoursed of; and that hereafter when your lips utter these three words,

your hearts may be full of feeling. And may the supreme God hasten the progress of Messiah's reign over the dark and benighted portion of our race! And may He send His own testimony along with our feeble services, and bless each heart in the congregation with a richer effusion of His royal presence than they have ever felt, that so we may yield increase of the fruits of righteousness, and wave to Heaven an offering more joyful than the treasures of harvest or the cattle upon a thousand hills.

Accompany this petition, then, Christian brethren, with the feeling of your own spirit, whatsoever is its real condition. When the candle of the Almighty burns bright within you, and dispels all darkness and pain, so that you rejoice with fulness of joy in God your Saviour; when your feet are established strong in the ways of holiness, and run with joy the race set before you; when these times of refreshing have come from the presence of the Lord,—then in the full glow of gratitude stand before Him, and pray that His kingdom may so come over the hearts and lives of all, and that your friends, and your brethren, and all men, may come to know these, the joys of His chosen, and to rejoice with His inheritance. For the poor world without this is starved and wretched; and many Christians, being lukewarm, and scanty of grace, are in daily fear. Cry out, therefore, in their behalf, as Paul did over his brethren and kinsmen after the flesh, as Christ did over the blood-shedding Jerusalem; and even be willing, as they were, to part with your happiness. Endure the hidings of God's countenance, so that the glory you love may be extended over those that sit in darkness and the region of the shadow of death. But not only during these victorious scenes of your Christian warfare, and these high days of enjoyment, when the soul is ravished with the near approaches of her Maker, but when running patiently the race, and contending steadily for the prize, with all your spiritual armour in exercise, and all the temptations of life plying their insinuations against your Christian virtue; even then, it is your part to rejoice that God's Spirit hath awakened you out of the thraldom of sin, and taught your hands to war against it,—that the gospel of His Son hath

opened up the barred avenues of hope, and given you peace towards God, whom He hath reconciled by His death. And being possessed of this hope of success, and assurance of Divine favour, take pity upon the multitudes who will not listen to the gospel, or be roused from lethargy and procrastination, but yield themselves willing servants of the devil, and run with greediness in the path of ruin. Oh, mourn over them, your townsmen, your familiar friends, perhaps your brothers and sisters! Mourn over them, as one who mourneth over a fatherless family, or a hopeless exile from his native home, or a noble man early doomed to an ignoble end! For, truly, they are without God their Father, and heaven their hope, and in hourly risk of coming to everlasting dishonour and degradation. Pray, therefore, that God's kingdom may come upon them; that, like you, they may be raised up, and taught to fight their foes, even though their life should be a constant battle—well assured that there remaineth a rest to them and to you, and a harvest if ye do not faint or weary in doing well. Nay, further, Christians, in your seasons of darkness and disconsolateness, when, by lack of prayer and watching, we fall back, and misgive in our hearts, God's presence being withdrawn, or rather clouds raised by our sins darkening the unchangeable face of His love, and the enemy, coming in upon our faintness like a flood, threatens a complete overthrow of our righteous estate; when we yield once more to the movements of sin within our members, and taste the bitter fruits and afflictions of those that fall away,—then by our very woes, by the insurrection of our inner man, and our broken peace, and forfeited hopes, we should pray hard, both for ourselves and others, that God's kingdom may come, and Satan's kingdom pass away. And if God may be pleased to hear, and return us to the stronghold of hope which is for the chief of sinners in the blessed Gospel of Christ, then, also, in the twilight and sickly cast which our recovering spirit wears, when there is great cloudiness over our head, and great uneasiness at heart, and much weakness to walk onward, and dread of the net out of which our feet have just been freed; when we feel the sorrow of repentance and the pain of recovery,—then let us

pray hard for ourselves and others, that God's kingdom may enlarge more and more, and never again be narrowed within us or without us, that men may not be set around with the sorrows of death, and cast down by departing from the living God. Christians, therefore, whatever be their state, whether triumphant, militant, backsliding, or recovering, can never be devoid of argument, from their own feelings, to present the petition, "Thy kingdom come," and so enforce it with such feelings of gratitude, of sorrow, or of contrition, as shall find for it acceptance from God, and an answer in peace.

Next, from looking into your own bosoms, and drawing arguments out of your own experience, look around you upon the world, and draw arguments from what you behold upon which to found a petition that God would do something for His kingdom, which suffereth violence and is taken by force. Look upon heathen lands, where Satan has never been bridled, nor the spirit of men pacified, where all is raging like the troubled sea which cannot rest, and is casting up scenes of cruelty and woe. Look upon Mohammedan lands, where sense, under the mask of faith, has triumphed over reason, and strong delusion hath extinguished every ray of Divine knowledge, and almost every ray of intellectual truth; so that, through very ignorance and barbarism, the fairest regions of the earth which they inhabit, and among the rest the land of milk and honey, have been spoiled and dispeopled, once more turned into the wasteness of sterility, and to tenantry of noisome and noxious creatures; or if some forms of the human race dwell there still, their minds, through very pride and contempt of all knowledge and generous intercourse are as unpeopled of any noble sentiments as the solitudes and ruins which they have made around them are unpeopled of their former free-born races of men. Look, also, upon the outcast and vagabond house of Israel, whose god is their money, which having hoarded, they keep with fear and trembling from the rapacious paw of the needy nations; a poor pitiful race, whose wretchedness is written legibly in their starved persons, and whose synagogue, I declare it, is not less unseemly in the eye of religion, and, I judge, not less hateful in the eye of God, than

is the Mohammedan mosque or heathen temple. Look unto Catholic Europe, which hath fallen under the curse of God, because of the long series of cruelties and abominations transacted in that mystery of iniquity, Babylon the great,—an abject priesthood, a people either of crouching devotees or regardless unbelievers, living either in the hotbed of a misguided superstition, or in the perfect callousness of confirmed Atheism. O fellow-Christians, what is to become of these benighted wastes of the world? How is an end to be put to this long carnival of wickedness, if we, who are enlightened to see their wretchedness, cry not unto the Lord day and night for the miseries of the earth? But here at home, in our Protestant lands, look and be ashamed, mourn and weep because of their distance from the living God! How His Sabbaths are profaned by high and low! how His temples are deserted, and the places of amusement and dissipation crowded! how busy market-making, and busy book-keeping, will hardly rest one day in seven either for fear of Divine or human laws! how the drunken men reel among our church-going people, and the solemn silence of our temples is disturbed by the rolling of chariot wheels, and dissipation keeps no disguise, and irreligion no shame! My brethren, let us pray hard to God that His kingdom may come here at home no less than abroad; and give Him no rest for our countrymen and kinsmen who may be caught in their iniquities; and for the commonweal, which carries such an undermining evil in her body. And if you will not intercede with God, and lift up the voice of your strong crying into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth, and refuse to hold your peace, then the undermining disease will gain upon the parts which still remain fresh and sound, and the whole commonweal will become the prey of selfishness and thoughtless pride in rulers, of sour discontent and prowling revenge in people; and Religion, with her healing daughters Mercy and Peace, will flee to the mountains, like Lot's solitary family out of Sodom, or our Saviour's family out of Rama, when Rachel wept for the slain of her children, and would not be comforted because they were not.

My Christian people, here we sit in our solemn assembly

in quietness and peace. We praise God with understanding; we pray to Him with the heart. We read His word with knowledge; we inquire into its meaning with all our faculties. In a sister assembly they are this day engaged holding the supper of the Lord, in remembrance of Him they love, and warming their hearts with the symbols of His dying love, (and God fill their hearts with a celestial elevation, and diffuse over their souls ethereal communion!) But, oh! let us think the while of the woeful festivals of our brethren in other parts: of the heathen, which consist not in weaning souls to God and virtue, but in sacrificing wretches to their grim idol, or burning widows and a hecatomb of slaves to the manes of the departed;—of the Mohammedans, who are trooping in caravans across the trackless deserts to the Holy City, there to crawl around the shrine of their Prophet, and return glorying in paradise secured;—and of Catholic lands, where, ever and anon, along the streets do pass the pompous train of the Host, bearing a consecrated wafer unto some dying creature, to cheat him into a delusion of his eternal welfare;—and at home, of the sensual, living the Sabbath out in hot excess of drinking, and laying their feverish heads at night upon a couch whence they may never rise; also, of the fashionable people, this day parading it in pride and vanity, or worse affections—whirling from place to place, and after a night of feasting, without a prayer, casting themselves upon their couches to dream of vanity! Of these things, then—true realities, not fancied pictures—think, my Christian people, with full and overflowing hearts, when you are here in the house of God, worshipping, as is good and comely! Lift up to your sovereign Lord the voice of your weeping, for the sake of the wretched people and the suffering Church, and utter abundantly the memory of its long-continued suffering, and tell of its present misery and hopelessness, until He shall break up the barriers which oppose His going forth, and travel abroad in the greatness of His strength, and make all men see and know His salvation!

And, truly, He hath broken up many of the barriers which were set against His goings forth; and in this our age He seems preparing His chariot for riding in triumph over the

necks of His enemies. When this prayer, "Thy kingdom come," began first to be offered up, His kingdom consisted but of a handful of Galilean peasants, possessed of no earthly treasure, save a treasure of contempt and derision. Now it has a people in every corner of the earth. Policy and arms at first set themselves against our King, and cut Him off; and they combined against the infant Church, and sought to cut off its memory from the earth. Ten several times they essayed it with all their might, but prevailed not against the prayers and blessings of the saints—their only armour. The infant Church, clothed with innocence and endurance, was, among the armed offensive and warlike nations, like a defenceless woman cast unto a mighty dragon, upon whose existence one might not calculate for a moment. She was forbidden to strike an alliance, offensive or defensive, with any earthly institution. From the sphere of her purity she shot a rebuke upon them all, for she was not permitted to yield up one point of her laws, or conform to one of their maxims. And when smitten, she was forbidden to smite in her own behalf. Cast into this world with her own customs and manners, diverse from those of all existing institutions, she was like a naked foreigner cast upon a hostile shore, ignorant of its manners and language, and incapable of acquiring them, who might in compassion be nourished his lifetime, but who could never be expected to bring over to his language and fashion any one, much less the whole of the people. Yet, behold, she liveth still, though so often prevented. She hath at length softened the dragon into whose jaws she was cast defenceless. She hath brought over to favour and to uphold her those human institutions among which she was cast, like one shipwrecked among his enemies. She hath made herself a great name upon the earth. She is cherished even in courts. She is not excluded from armies, but hath many of her humblest and meekest children upon the tented field. Kings do her reverence in their proclamations, legislators take her to a share in their councils, generals ascribe to her the glory of their achievements, and none but a few abandoned men are found to mutter a word against her mild and merciful influence.

Oh, how another psalmist might sing the preservation and triumphs of the Church! She has been watched in times the most perilous, and her prayers heard and answered from the depths of dungeons. When discarded from all observation of men, and extirpated, as they vainly thought, for ever, her psalms and her prayers have ascended from the crannies of the rocks unto the ears of the Highest in heaven. She has been visited in the desert like another Hagar, when she was weeping over the last of her children ready to die, and could afford them no more nourishment from her withered breasts. Her meek-eyed priests, clothed with salvation, have been drawn from their cloistered seclusions to minister a word of grace to national diets and assemblies. Her saintly maidens have walked forth washed in innocence, and clothed with the beauties of holiness; and in this land, from the scaffolds of martyrdom, with more than manly fortitude, have testified till their ruthless persecutors blushed with shame, and the stupid crowd stood transfixed with admiration. And her men, when driven from every refuge, have given up homes and possessions, and everything dear to man, and done their religious worship in the sanctuary of inaccessible wilds; and, when hunted to desperation, have sometimes girt themselves with rude weapons, and, being set on, proved themselves lions in fight for the sake of the Lord of hosts. These were the triumphs of the kingdom in the former ages, and should not remain unsung.

And in the present, if her triumphs be more gentle they are not less glorious. They who were the Church's persecutors have become her friends, and joined in society with their meanest subjects to make way for her holy laws. Nations have forborne to molest her missionary servants, who are the ambassadors of the kingdom. They have joined in a common union to send her voice through all the earth, and her words to the world's end. The heathen and barbarous powers are suing for embassies of her ministers, against whom lately their territorities were barred. All Christendom is beginning to forget its partitions, and each party its long-remembered grudge. The zeal for conformity, which threatened in Protestant countries as much bloodshed as the mother of harlots

drank from the cup of her abominations, is giving way to charity and forbearance. The wounds in Christ's mystical body are healing. The various members are content with their various offices, and the word of the Lord is prospering apace. Heathen lands see the salvation of our God, and distant isles rejoice that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Oceans are crossed and continents wandered over for nations to bring unto the obedience of the truth; and God, by manifold tokens, prepares the way of His servants before them; and the hearts of the barbarous people are opened for the reception of her laws. I call upon you to be stirred up to magnify the Lord for His wonderful goodness unto the children of men, whom He is visiting in mercy, to call out of them a people for His name. He hath heard the prayers of His people, and He hath answered them according to their request. He hath looked down from the seat of His holiness, and had compassion upon the outcasts of Israel, and is preparing to gather them into one. His anger is turned away from heathen lands, and the isles have been made partakers of His grace. He hath made bare His arm, and cast the idols of the nations into the depths of the sea. He hath fulfilled His promise to His saints, and given them favour among princes. The name of Jesus is named in every tongue, and the poor of every nation begin to hear His gospel gladly. Let God be magnified for His great goodness, for His loving-kindness to the children of men.

Here, then, brethren, is encouragement! Formerly we presented you with argument to be unwearied in your applications to God for His blessing upon the wretched nations. Pray that His kingdom may come, and that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed, and that the kingdom of glory may be advanced! And that your prayers may be acceptable in the sight of God, let these be with the uplifting of holy hands, lest God bring against you the accusation He brought against Israel: "When you make many prayers, I will not hear you; your hands are full of blood." "Who is the man that shall ascend unto the hill of God? He who hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." "Wash you, therefore, make you clean; put away

the evil of your doings; cease to do evil, and learn to do well; seek judgment; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow. Come, then, saith the Lord, and let us reason together." But if you refuse to be of His kingdom yourselves, how can you pray that others should be brought unto it? If you belong to the enemy, and have in your hands the weapons of rebellion, how will God accept any petition from your hands? But if you be servants of God, and partakers of His Holy Spirit, then upon all occasions speak boldly in behalf of the kingdom of His dear Son. Not only pray to Heaven, but shew allegiance and bravery before men. So did Peter and Paul at Jerusalem, when their lives were threatened for it; and Stephen, when his life was taken; and in later times Wickliffe, Jerome, Luther, and Knox. The kingdom of God will never come if its subjects allow themselves to be cowed and kept in check by the subjects of darkness. There is a bravery, intrepidity, and devotion which become a Christian as well as they do the defender of his country; and there is a skill in weapons which you must have if you would fight the good fight in the place and age we live in. There are men amongst us who affect to break the bands of God and His Anointed, and to cast their cords away; who call their most blessed government blind and grovelling superstition; and distil their power secretly through a thousand rills, like those who take a city by poisoning its fountains and streams of water. Be not alarmed. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his hot displeasure. He shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Be stout-hearted and courageous, therefore; allow no iniquity nor infidelity to be spoken before you. Speak boldly in the behalf of Christ, and, when need is, contend for the faith as it was once delivered to the saints. Learn constancy here by the example of the children of this world, who are wiser in their generation than the children of light. Look to the history of England, and latterly of Scotland, and remark with what unwearied steadfastness, through long centuries of oppression, with hardly a ray of hope or a chance of success, the friends of freedom and

constitutional liberty—who, I glory to say, were Puritans chiefly, men of God—united, and were broken, and rallied again, until they made good that fair form of government under which we live. Yet these noble sons of this free-born race adored not the reality but the idea of freedom; for she had not yet been carved out in her beauty. These men of constancy and patriotism—I glory to say again they were men of private worth, and mostly men of religious lives—had no certainty nor assurance of success; they were crushed, and bruised, and scattered, and suppressed for long intervals; but their blood flowed warm and their hearts beat high in the noble cause. They had no certainty of success, I say; no divine premonitions that their hopes would come to pass, no guidance of Heaven how to bring it round; but they persevered, and, after many miscarriages, Providence gave them what, with such pure and noble intentions, they had laboured for. But as for us Christians, (mark the difference!) we have perfect certainty of success; it is in the fates; it hath been revealed by a divine opening into the cloudy future; and come about it must, as sure as God exists, who hath resolved and revealed it. Be courageous, then; be cheerful, as the mariner is when he discerneth his haven, though far off; as the traveller, when he discerns, through darkness, the twinkling light of his home. Exert you; come forward willingly and boldly. Think you of the reign of civil freedom,—which, though the best of temporal blessings, is yet but a temporal blessing,—it was not granted to your fathers but at the instance of such imprecations, and covenanting, and desperate contentions, as our history, from Magna Charta, doth unfold. Think you of the universal reign of righteousness, which canopies and contains the other, as the heaven of heavens doth the ball of this earth—will it come about, think you, at no expense? Will God cheapen it down to the price of a few cold prayers? No, indeed! There must be such a conjunct movement of Christians,—such a wrestling in prayer, such a contention at home and abroad with the prince of darkness, as hath not yet been seen or felt within his region. Up, then, fellow-Christians, encouraged by the promises of success, and stimulated to exertion by the greatness and noble-

ness, and even difficulty, of the undertaking! Let us join hand in hand in behalf of God and the regeneration of the world, praying Him in season and out of season, labouring by word and deed, by sacrifice of time and of means, and by every imaginable resource, to be instruments and means in His hand for accomplishing the grand consummation, when the wilderness and solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the rose, and when the earth shall be full of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea; when all men shall be blessed in Jesus, and all shall call Him blessed! Amen, and amen.

[It is to be regretted that the remaining Discourses of this series were not preserved by the author.—ED.]

ON PRAISE.

ON PRAISE.

I.

THERE are various relations in human life which nature hath established of her own self, independent both of society and of religion,—as those of husband and wife, of father and child, of brethren and kinsmen. The whole patriarchal or family state, whose happiness and innocence poets have sung and the oracles of truth recorded, and from whose simple customs philosophers have derived the rudiments of law and government, is the oldest and most constant association of man to his fellow-man ; and it is everywhere productive of more virtue and happiness than all the associations engendered by sentiment or established by society,—insomuch, that one of the surest tests which can be had of any project for the common weal, is to observe whether it tends to weaken or confirm those alliances which nature hath begotten, and for the maintenance of which she hath deposited ample stores of affection in every breast.

There are, next, certain other relations of man to his fellow-man which grow in the progress of political society, and which are necessary to the common weal, though they have no foundation in the natural constitution of our being. These are the relations of servants and masters, of rich and poor, of ignorant and wise, of high and low, of governors and governed, —in the wise regulation whereof consists the happiness and prosperity of a state ; in their unwise regulation, the slavery, degradation, and thraldom in which many nations are held.

The former is the work of the Creator, who hath implanted the feelings of domestic affection out of which they spring; the latter is the work of the creature for its own comfort and defence. But the heart of man hath within itself a thousand feelings which neither domestic nor political life can gratify. It is rich in sympathies and antipathies, in love and enmity, and hath a shade of feeling towards almost every one of its fellows: some loving with more than brotherly love; some admiring for their nobleness; some revering for their wisdom; and some longing after for their goodness and mercy. The soul asserts to herself a choice among the varieties of men, and fills up her powers of liking and disliking, of admiring and of despising, of trusting and of fearing, of loving and of hating, out of the various characters with which she is surrounded.

Hence there ariseth a third set of relations: those of sentiment, diverse from those of nature and those of society, which spring out of the mind's free-will and choice, and which are numerous according to the activity and wilfulness of every spirit. These are the relations of friendship, through all the degrees of intimacy, the varieties of esteem, the Platonic forms of love, the communion of party, and the little circles of society into which a community is divided upon some principle different from that of blood or of political law.

These three distinct kinds of relationship are none of them hid from the observation of religion, which takes cognisance of them all, and teaches how they may be honestly and honourably performed. Nowhere are the affections of the family, or the obligations of the state, or the sentiments of love and kindness towards all, so strongly urged and maintained, as in the Word of God; and nowhere are the want of natural affection, the spirit of turbulence and misrule, the sentiment of enmity and revenge, so frequently and severely condemned, and so threatened with the penalties both of this life and of that which is to come.

But it is not for the purpose of shewing the wholesome discipline under which religion holdeth these several departments of human fellowship that we have distinguished between them, but in order to shew you that after all these relations

of the family, of society, and of sentiment, are fulfilled, there remaineth a fourth set of relations—our relations to God—which are not yet entered on, and out of which spring religion, the highest exercise of the soul, and all the acts of public and private worship. The relation of man to his Maker is founded upon principles as distinct as that of a child to his parents, or of man to his fellow-man; and to neglect it is productive of results as unfavourable to our happiness and dignity, as to fulfil it is productive of results favourable to both.

Now, having proposed to discourse to you of public worship in general, and of its several parts, it seems the fit and proper way of proceeding to open up to you at large the various relations in which you stand to God, as your Creator, your Preserver, your Redeemer, and your Sanctifier; that your minds being filled with the knowledge thereof, may perceive it to be as unnatural a thing not to praise Him, and worship Him, and serve Him, as it would be unnatural in a son to abstain from the honour of his parents, in a servant to abstain from the obedience of his master, or in a subject to abstain from regard to the magistrate, or in a man to abstain from the love of those who possess the qualities of amiable and worthy men. Such knowledge of our standing towards God, I hold absolutely necessary for the existence of true devotion: which being founded on ignorance, is superstition; being founded on error, is will-worship and fanaticism; but being founded on truth, is the noblest exercise to which the soul of man can address itself in this lower world.

In opening up this fourth set of relations, the highest, the best, and the most honourable,—the alliance into which our souls are honoured to stand to the Most High God, the Creator of heaven and of earth, and the Father of the spirits of all flesh,—we shall begin with our relation to Him as our Creator.

Had it not been for the fall, this feeling of connexion with the God who formed every faculty, and furnished to every faculty its proper action and enjoyment, would have been as habitual and constant within us as the feeling of self-existence. Indeed, we would have had no feeling of self-existence,

but of existence in God, had we been standing in the completeness in which our Creator's fingers left us. Our thoughts would have been of Him, our feelings towards Him, our actions for His sake; and what the believer is represented to be,—a member of the body which is Christ, a branch of the vine which is Christ,—we would have been of God, members of Him; that is, sympathising with the Divine mind so far as our nature gave us the ability, loving what He loved, and hating what He hated, and pursuing what He desired. Adam heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the midst of the garden,—that is, his ear recognised the footsteps and voice of God, to which ours are deaf in all His goings forth. And Adam conversed with God,—that is, his faculty of reason could commune with God, as man communeth with man. But, alas! darkness and an impassable gulf of separation hath come between the sense and Him that planted the sense; between the reason and Him that endowed the reason. There needeth a new birth, a new creation, a new image in the soul; there needeth a revelation, an uncovering of what but for the fall would never have been veiled. We are, each one, by nature blind and benighted as to our obligations to God, and we yield Him no homage for what we hold of His hand. The consciousness of high endowments doth beget no fervent gratitude; the conception of noble truths doth move the lips to utter no praise; the meditation of great designs doth engender no looking into the sanctuary of our strength, and we break not forth into singing when our purposes are crowned with success. Ah, no! Satan hath our faculties in his hold, and he turneth these acknowledgments a thousand ways, but never to God. He flatters our vanity by possessing us with the self-idolatry that we are obliged only to ourselves. You hear men boasting of their gifts, and applauding their actions. They smite the hand upon the breast, and speak of their virtues, of their honesty, and their honour; they smite their forehead, and boast of their knowledge; they open up their history, to prove how a man is the artificer of his own fortunes. Satan deludes others to refer their goodly condition to education, and others to the age and country in which they are born, and others to their noble stock and good descent.

And to every quarter of idolatry he allows the people to go astray, keeping them diligently from acknowledging the Father and fountain of their being, the length of their days, and the strength of their life.

Now, the heathen, who know not the noble origin of their being, are not to be blamed for taking to themselves the credit and honour of their actions. But we, who have had it revealed to us from on high, that we are furnished with all strength and sufficiency from the sanctuary above, and who know that, without God's vital spark, we are but dust of the earth, and shall, when that vital spark is withdrawn, resolve into idle dust again,—we are guilty before God of every crime in exalting ourselves like the heathen, and boasting of our prowess as they do, and by self-will exiling ourselves from the fellowship of God.

To instruct our ignorance, the Lord Jesus, who is our Wisdom, who is the Word of God, hath come down; and He who is the Sun of righteousness hath arisen upon us with healing in His beams. He hath come to turn us from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to serve the living God. And by this Messenger of the covenant God commandeth all of us to repent, seeing "he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

And hath the Most High God, to instruct our ignorance, made Himself known as our Creator, and asked of us to acknowledge Him as such, and we choose not so to do? What a horrid crime is this! Is there no honour, is there no nobility, is there no love, is there no gratitude, or high ambition, that worms of the earth, being solicited by the High and Holy One, who inhabiteth the praises of eternity, should hold aloof, and be content to grovel still,—should be obdurate, and render no tribute of thankfulness? What baseness, what grovelling meanness, that will recognise no favour, no dignity, no honour, in deriving our name and being from Jehovah the highest! And we will fight for precedency here, and we will ransack antiquity to find an honourable ancestry, and we will lust after the distinctions of heraldry,

and strive to get a name for the sake of our children; but the high origin of God for our Father, the ancient stock of the Eternal, and the lofty line of the Most High, hath in it no nobility! What shocking perversity! what shameless impiety!

Now, that which the Lord our God requireth of us by the ministry of His Son, is that we should draw near to Him in full confidence, as children to a father, and hold with Him an intercourse of affection, as with the Being from whom we have derived our being, and who hath nursed and brought us up as children. He doth not wish to burden us with obligations; but He wisheth that we should not be lost for want of affection. He pitieth to behold us under Satan's influence, led astray amongst cold regions of selfishness and malice; at war with others, and at war with ourselves, and at war with His Holy Spirit. He longs to restore us our lost peace; to adopt us back again as children, and admit us to all the privileges of His family.

With such overtures of grace He hath sent forth His only-begotten and well-beloved Son, who hath by the blood of His cross made peace between us, and brought us nigh who were heretofore afar off. There is no let nor hindrance; you may join the family of the angels and the archangels; you may partake of the Divine nature, which spreads through all the unfallen children of His hand; be delivered from all self-idolatry, and idolatry of outward things; brought into peace with mankind, and restored to the worship and service of your heavenly Father.

We are His workmanship, formed out of the dust of the ground, and breathed upon by the living Spirit of God. And the same inspiration of the Lord which gave us life, hath given us more knowledge than the beasts of the field, and more understanding than the fowls of heaven. Certainly there was nought of it while yet we lay in our mother's womb, or hung upon our mother's breast. It hardly dawned in infancy, and in childhood it was feeble as the springing of day; and had the Almighty not found for us books and teachers, and all the ministry of knowledge, we had arisen untutored as the Indian, and savage as the denizens of the wilderness. The meals of meat upon which we implore a

blessing, and for which we render our thanksgiving, are not more gifts of the Almighty than the lessons of knowledge or the examples of goodness by which He maketh life and health to overspread the soul. Truly, I know not to whom the credit of our understanding is to be given, save to God; for man cannot create an understanding in any of the lower creatures, neither can he set a crazed understanding to rights in any of his fellows. The process of vegetation in the ground is not more beyond our knowledge and our power, without the help of the nutritious earth and the fostering sun, than is the process of reason in producing thought and feeling from outward impressions and intercourse with books and men. The soul of man is a great unfathomable depth of wisdom. Its thoughts, its feelings, its passions, its joys and griefs, its fancies, its ambitions, and its far-ranging speculations,—can any man reflect on these without wonder and astonishment? Within so little compass, what wonderful things are contained! What knowledge! what design! what wonder-working power! A star is not too remote, though set in the utmost depths of the azure heaven, but man shall fetch it out of its dark chamber, and make it visible. He shall find a line to sound its depth, and give you a conception of its infinite remoteness. And how he reacheth into time, backward to the very edge of creation, and speculateth onward to the very edge of the general doom! He minuteth the changes of the revolving heavens, and writeth beforehand the courses of the stars. And he not only worketh in deep thoughts as an occupation, but he hath entertainment, and taketh enjoyment therein; he maketh himself merry with their curious combinations of wit and humour, and thence deriveth a recreation far above the recreations of sensible and visible things. In short, the understanding of man hath in it a function almost divine of inventing and creating. His ingenuity is immense, and his devices without bounds; and the imaginations of his heart are beyond comparison more numerous than the sands upon the sea-shore, or the stars in the firmament of heaven. In the 8th Psalm, the Psalmist, after surveying all the handiworks of God, rests upon man, and expatiates beautifully upon this favourite child of the Maker's hand.

Think, then, of the noble form of being which you have derived from the hand of your Creator, and consider what obligations are thereby imposed upon you,—obligations of gratitude, love, and praise. God should be interwoven with the whole tissue of our thoughts, seeing He is the Father of thought. Every high imagination should bow the head to Him, and every bold design should seek His safe-conduct to its issues; every affection should ask His permission to go abroad; every doubt should consult Him, and every resolved doubt acknowledge His counsel. Enjoyment should pay a first-fruit to Him, and sorrow should cry to Him for aid. Health should praise Him with all its strength, and sickness should repose its head upon the bosom of His consolation. Fear should flee to Him for succour, and courage should dress herself in the armour of God. Success should triumph and glory in the Lord, and defeat rally itself beneath the buckler of His salvation. And where to stop in this enumeration of our obligations to the God who formed our spirits, and sustaineth them in all their goings forth, I find not; for we live in Him, and move in Him, and breathe in Him, and in Him have all our being. Then I see not but that every action and every movement of life, every aspiration or word breathed from our lips, and every consciousness of our existence, every emotion of the heart, every desire of the heaving breast, and every pulsation of throbbing life, should feel itself, and confess itself to be from the Giver of every good and perfect gift, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not. And a habitual sense of the Divinity, a habitual reverence of Him, should go with us, and dwell with us; and as we cannot forget ourselves, so ought we to be unable to forget Him. He should cleave to us like our very being; and, instead of pride, vanity, or pleasure being the moving principles of our life, it should be moved throughout by sentiments of piety, and gratitude, and wisdom. I do not say that we should do nothing but express or feel these sentiments. We should do whatever is right to be done in our station, think what is right to be thought, and speak what is good to be spoken; but the righteousness of the thing done, felt, or spoken, should always be in mind; the Source of our

ability to do, feel, and speak rightly, should always be in mind; the regret for having failed to feel, speak, and do righteously, or the thankfulness for having succeeded, should always be present to us. And therefore, though our thought, speech, and action differ not outwardly or ostensibly from the world's, yet the faculties of the soul they exercise differ entirely: in it, selfishness, vanity, or pride, or some ungodly temper; in us, faith, piety, and love towards God, the author of our being.

Now, this worship of God, considered as the Creator, the Preserver of our being, is what they are wont to call natural religion; and it is natural, in contradistinction to Christian worship, which comes of our relation to God through a Redeemer, but natural it is not, in contradistinction to revealed. For our relation to God as our Creator and Preserver, with the worship which arises thence, is as much the fruit of revelation as our relation to God as the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, with the worship that springeth thence. So that those who adopt the former, and do without the latter, do, as it were, half believe God; they believe in part, and disbelieve the rest, though both parts are built upon the same authority. If any one say, nature apprehends the former; I ask him how the Athenians, the learnedest of nations, were ignorant thereof. For Paul first taught the Areopagus of Athens, the most learned court of the world, those very doctrines of God, as the Creator of all men that dwell upon the face of the earth; their Preserver, and the Bounder of their habitation; God, who made the world, and all things therein, (Acts xvii. 24-31.)

But Satan, who sitteth on a throne of division, and is the father of division, being a murderer and a liar from the beginning, suggests to our carnal minds that these overtures of Fatherhood are common to all; the peasant and the beggar, and the vulgar mob may have it no less than we; there is no distinction in it, no aristocratic dignity, no solitary prerogative. Ah! the bitterness of my heart ariseth against such wretched sentiments. Nothing dignified, say you, in what is common? Is there no dignity in a heart to feel, in a head to understand, in a tongue to speak, in a hand to do, and in

senses to enjoy? And yet these are common as our kind. No; the dignity is not in the feeling heart, but in the heart trained to feel according to form; not in the understanding head, but in the head taught to understand according to the customs of our rank and party; not in the truth-speaking tongue, but in the tongue which can con the hypocritical jargon of faction; not in the head to do, but in this or that skilful accomplishment; not in the body to enjoy, but in the colour or fashion of its raiment, or the modestness of its manners. It is thus that Satan deludes us by his sophistry; but, O brethren, if there be no understanding, no just discernment, no conscience of truth, then, I ask, Is there no charity, is there no humanity, is there no fellow-feeling in the heart of man, that thus they should be divided and separated asunder by the devil's vile pretexts,—that they should forget God's noble community of gifts, and part from each other upon silly pretexts of vanity and selfishness? Thus it is that envy, hatred, contempt, dislike, and all unfriendliness are engendered. We will not take counsel of God, or acknowledge God; we will take counsel of the devil, and him only will we serve.

Be not you so, beloved brethren, who join together in the common name of Christ to worship God, even the Father. Be mindful of your common origin, and regard God as the great Author of your being. Acknowledge to Him all your gifts, and let a common, undivided sacrifice of thanksgiving ascend to Him who hath formed us all so wonderfully and well. We are His offspring; He hath formed us of one blood, to dwell upon the face of the earth, and hath before appointed the bounds of our habitation. Therefore regard each other as the tenants and occupiers, each one of so much power and of so much enjoyment, not derived from your own ability, but bestowed by the grace and goodness of your heavenly Father. If any one, at any time, be possessed of self-magnifying notions, and would be disabused of them, let him try to restore sight to the blind, or feet to the lame; to create a blade of grass for his cattle, or a morsel of bread for himself; to restore the memory of dotard age; to give man's experience to the infant, or self-command to the lunatic; or

to restore reason to the crazed idiot; or, as the poet says, "to minister to a mind diseased," or to "pluck from the heart a rooted sorrow." What, then, meaneth this self-idolatry? What is man, that we should worship him? or the son of man, that we should bow before him? He is of yesterday; he is crushed before the moth, and is altogether vanity. While he standeth well with his Maker, he is a noble plant, whom the great Husbandman shall transplant from earth to heaven, from amongst the drooping, withering plants of earth, to the perennial plants of heaven. Away from his Maker, he is nothing: a tolerated rebel, whom his rightful Master could crush with a blow; a vaunting fool, whose self-willed words are endured for a day by his Creator, even as a father endures the folly of his child, if happily by long-suffering he may bring him to repentance.

Seeing then, brethren, we are the disciples of Christ, and know the common origin of our creature-gifts, and who it is that maketh us to differ, it behoveth us to bestow upon God all the honour, and according as He hath exalted us the more, to devote ourselves to Him the more, and to behave to each other after the Christian rule, that he who is strongest should help the weakest, and he who is oldest should assist the youngest, and so enjoy, as it were, a community of spiritual gifts. This is the root of Christian charity, and of the congregational brotherhood after which we seek. This is the death of envy, malice, and all unrighteousness. That moment we recognise God as the fountain of our strength, that moment we die to ourselves and to the world, and join ourselves to His Spirit. Without such dependence, there is no religion; without such acknowledgment of our Creator, there is no love of the Saviour; without such devotion, there is no love of Christ. Therefore, beloved brethren, attend the more carefully to that which hath been said, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

Therefore, beloved brethren, our joy and crown, join yourselves to God, your Creator; acknowledge Him in all your ways, and He will direct your paths. Pay your vows to Him, and He will increase your store. Possess your souls in peace, and your bodies in purity before Him, and to the one He

will send salvation, to the other balmy health. You will love the light of His countenance all your life long; and when He calleth you away, you will depart to honour, and glory, and immortality; and His work shall be glorious upon you when mortality is swallowed up in life, and corruption hath put on incorruption, and then your soul shall know its nobility, which here is all defaced. Then shall the gold, which now is dim, become bright as at the first, and the fine gold, which now is changed, become seven times refined; and the world shall be purified, and wickedness shall cease, and your Creator dwell with you in very deed, and your Saviour rule you with His rod of righteousness, and his sceptre of love.

II.

DEARLY-BELOVED BRETHREN,—In a former discourse we set forth the necessity of spiritual fellowship and brotherhood among the members of the same Christian congregation;—not intending thereby to break down the good and wholesome distinction of rank and profession, which are necessary to both the spiritual and temporal welfare of all, but to suspend their operation whenever we are met together for the purposes of religion. In all the avocations of human life, God hath appointed a righteous rule for our guidance, and to every rank He hath taught their relative duties, which can at no rate be neglected; and thus it comes to pass that the doctrine of Christ joins and cements and hallows the various relations in which man standeth to his fellow-man; and when any one in the name of Christ preaches discontent and disagreement and insurrection, he is a deceiver, a wolf in sheep's clothing, and unworthy of this holy ministry, which is peace, piety, and love. The lesser feeling of worldly difference must give way to the greater feeling of spiritual and eternal equality. And when we gather ourselves together as into this place, servant and master, man and child, governors and governed, to worship the God of our salvation, and meditate on the things of our peace, we are equal and alike, and no sentiment of difference or distinction should then be permitted; no act of reverence or service should then be enforced. The master should be as willing to help as the servant, the greatest should be as the least, and the oldest as the youngest. For we are met on purpose to forget the world and our worldly avocations, and therefore every memorial of them should be

dismissed as an evil intruder. We are met to worship one God, and serve one Master; therefore other masters and other services should not divide our thoughts: and we are met to humble ourselves, and bow our heads in the dust before One that is alone exalted; therefore we should shake off all self-magnifying acts or thoughts, as arts of the Enemy to hinder the humility of our souls. Finally, we are in truth and verity the members of the same body, which is the Church, and under the same head, which is Christ, whose rule is, that the greatest should be as the least, and the highest as he that doth serve. And to crown all, God will not accept a divided service; a part will not content Him; the homage of the whole man is His; and no one dare intermeddle with His rightful sovereignty, who hath said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and strength, and soul, and might."

Then what is due in the house of God during the service of public worship, is likewise due from one to another in every place where an act of worship or of spiritual communion is carried on. In families, when the father performs the office of priest, and warns his household on things pertaining to their souls, or offers their spiritual sacrifices of praise and prayer before the mercy-seat of God, he should regard all as equal and alike, and speak to his servants as to his children, and to his children as to his servants. Likewise, when men meet together for spiritual converse, or when, upon ordinary occasions, things of the Spirit are discoursed of. In all things appertaining to the Church of Christ and the edification of souls, the Christian community of feelings should prevail, the eternal equality of gifts should be remembered; for we are then on sacred ground, and the shoes of every man's dignity should be taken from his feet, and we should walk upon the same common earth, and feel the natural equality of sinful men. It is not sight, but faith, which then directs our goings; and the sightly things of life have no effect, save to cloud and eclipse the revealed things of faith. It is of things unseen we commune, of things above the earth that we discourse, with things eternal that we are concerned; and therefore the degrees that should be observed are the degrees of faith and of charity;

the station that should be held in estimation is the spiritual station of the Church; and the promotion that should be sought after is the promotion in the stature of the new man, which is created after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness.

To establish such a sacred region of communion and fellowship, whence no earthly ambitions nor vanities should intrude among the children of this flock, is the high aim which we proposed to you in our last discourse. To create in every man's mind a habitual reverence for things spiritual, and a relish for spiritual discourse, and love of spiritual men, so that in your goings out and comings in you should love to dilate upon the concerns of the soul and the daily experience of the grace of God, rather than upon the transient novelties and follies of life; that in the home and by the wayside we might be at home with God, and nourish the sentiment of His presence and guardianship at all times, and be ready to commune thereon with all men who are not deaf to Divine admonition;—this, beloved brethren, is the desire of our hearts, and our prayer to God for the sake of yourselves; and for this end we shall gladly expend the utmost powers of argument and persuasion which the Lord our God hath vouchsafed, and may be pleased to vouchsafe, to our spirit.

For this purpose of building up in every man's heart a sanctuary of spiritual things, and of establishing amongst you all a spiritual fellowship in the members of Christ, we thought it best to discourse in order of the various parts of Divine worship, that your minds, being filled with their sacredness, and your hearts burdened with their obligations, no vain and worldly thought might find room, and your spirits have rest for a season, to be possessed and filled with the things of the Spirit of God. It seemed to us better to enlarge your knowledge of these holy engagements, than to rebuke the ignorance which may at present exist; to address ourselves to your understanding, rather than provoke your zeal; to stir your minds up by way of remembrance, rather than challenge what at present may be wrong. And now may the Lord, while we teach others, teach ourselves; and while we shew to them the holiness of His service, may He shew to us who lead and

guide the same, how we may best direct the people in the paths of His holiness.

Follow the inhabitants of this land to the remotest regions of the earth, which they have won with their spear and their bow, and where they dwell among the nations which they have subjected, and see if they do not associate with each other; and when they are met together, if they do not discourse of the land of their fathers, and the home of their childhood; if they do not peruse again and again every account they receive from its distant shores; if they do not read it to their friends, and talk of it to their acquaintance, and interest their hearts about it, though it is past and distant, more than with all that is passing around. It is not fear that leads them to associate together; for they fear not to dwell alone, surrounded with whole nations of the subject people; but it is love, it is sympathy, community of sweet feelings and proud recollections, and happy hopes of returning again to their well-beloved land. Again, if you follow the footsteps of our countrymen resident among the nations of Europe, when they leave you in quest of health, or recreation, or amusement, what, of all they find in these lands, is the most dear to their eyes? Is it not the sight of a countryman, walking in the fearlessness, and talking in the liberty, of his native land? And dearer than all the music and melody of foreign parts is the voice of their native speech; and the privileges of their native land are the theme of their consolation amidst the state of arbitrary power; and the hope of returning to it, after a season, is the most delightful of their earthly visions. Now, are not the disciples of Christ as settlers and colonists amongst enemies whom they have subdued?—that is, the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, the evil affections and passions of the mind, worldly desires and worldly honours, with all the ambitions and desires that follow them. In these it is their profession to intermeddle not. Christ hath put them under their feet. They have overcome them in the name and strength of the Most High; and being surrounded with them on every side, what is left but to despise them, and pity those who are led astray of them, and to hold themselves for the communion

and fellowship of those things into the love of which they have been born by the Spirit of God? Also, they are as noble strangers living amongst a degraded people, whom they may and will endeavour to excel, but in whose degradation they will have no fellowship whatever. They know that they are descended of a high stock, men of God, whose children they are by a spiritual birth. The people around them know of no such noble alliance with Heaven, but act as the children of the world and of the wicked one. They know that after a season they shall return to dwell with their Father in heaven; the people around them think of nothing beyond death and the grave: they hold intercourse with the home after which they sigh, and with the Lord whose absence they lament, by prayer, by His Word, and the indwelling of His Spirit; the people around them hold no such noble intercourse. What sympathy is there between light and darkness? what communion between Christ and Belial?—even as little is there between the true servants of Christ and the true children of the world.

Much more could I say of the bonds of brotherhood in which Christians are united by their work of faith, their patience of hope, and their labour of love; and to much greater extent would the Scriptures bear me out which represent His disciples as one with Him, as He is one with God,—as united to Him as wife with husband, bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh. Hence He is not ashamed to call the Church His spouse, and to promise that He will present her unto God, pure and blameless, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Again, He saith, "I am the vine, and ye are the branches; whosoever abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." Again, "I am the bread sent down from heaven; unless ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye have no part in me." Again, "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in thee, and walk in thee; I will be their God, and they shall be my people." And again, "Ye are the body of Christ and members in particular; by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body." And again, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." And so,

in a thousand places, is this mystical union of Christ with believers set forth, which is the perfection of that community of saints which we have been this day setting forth, and for the sake of which we are commanded to leave father and mother, and brother and sister, and become His disciples.

These things I say not to encourage a spirit of separation and pride on the part of believers, and of enmity towards the unconverted world, but in order to justify that peculiarity which there is in their nature, that organisation which there ought to be in the Church, and that frequent congregation of themselves together for their mutual edification and growth in grace.

III.

PSALM ix. 1, 2.

I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works. I will be glad and rejoice in thee; I will sing praise to thy name, O thou Most High.

IN proceeding to discourse of the praise of God, which forms a common, and, I think, the most noble and exalted part of divine worship, I recall to your minds a previous discourse concerning the knowledge of God, and of His acts, that love of His character, and other forms of feeling towards Him, which are all presupposed by the act of praise; for before we can praise we must approve, and before we can approve we must apprehend, and before we can apprehend we must inquire and know. The mind first informs itself of the existence of God, then of His attributes and works, which having well perused and considered, and highly approving, it becomes wrought upon by its much delight, and bursts forth into a song of celebration and joy. The heart is satisfied beyond what it can contain,—it calls upon the imagination for conception, and the imagination calls upon the fancy for images, and these call upon the tongue for language, and the language calls for melody and music to enliven the sense, so that the whole man is wrapt into a kind of ravishment,—the sense, the understanding, the heart, and the imagination do all join together to adore the most excellent Author of their being, who, well pleased with so full a share of the powers of man, lends His gracious ear to the praise of His lowly creatures, and sheds upon their awakened and opened souls blessings which refresh their spirits like the dew which falleth upon the tender grass. In this solemn and exalted service of praising our Creator and Redeemer, all other

religious employments lend their aid. We read the Word to know the only true God, and Him whom He hath sent, and we observe the ways of His providence, to be instructed in His dealings towards men. His works, which are wonderful and wise, we peruse, in order to see the might and cunning of the right hand of the Most High; and the knee we bend in prayer, in order that our heart may be softened by the tender mercies, and enriched with the blessings of Jehovah. And the prayer lifted up and answered from on high, the creation round about discoursed over and understood, providence observed and wisely interpreted, the word studied and spiritually discerned; these and all other religious duties do but furnish those materials upon which the soul may brood, until, being filled with her high and heavenly musings, she overfloweth in the utterance of praise and adoration to Him who hath filled her with good, and crowned her with loving-kindness and with tender mercy.

The praise which is not founded upon knowledge is formality or flattery, and may be accounted of by man, who hath not an eye to perceive its hollowness, or a heart to reject its falsehood, and whose vanity may feel flattered by that which his honesty would reject; but even the better and nobler sort of men will not bear praise from those who know them not sufficiently, but hate its heartless tones and extravagant expressions, and forecast how soon it may turn into spiteful abuse; and those who offer such lip-language and tongue-service are set down as the most fallen and ignoble of their kind, who sell approbation and praise, the most valuable utterances of the soul, for some speculation of personal gain. If such an offering of praise be hateful to the better and nobler sort of men, how much more hateful to God, who hath no ear for flattery and no eye for beholding deceit, who cannot be deceived by appearances, or won upon by protestations, but must have heart-homage or none! The Roman Catholic maxim, (with what truth imputed to them I know not, but most certainly acted upon in their service of God,) that ignorance is the mother of devotion, is the most wicked and irreligious notion which ever possessed the heart of man. For though there be parts of religion for which no evidence

of the sense, nor demonstration of reason can be had, standing simply as revelation, with no other evidence than that external evidence with which it was first ushered into the world, and that inward manifestation of light and happiness which it makes within the souls of all who by faith receive it, for the obtaining of which faith is the organ, as sense and understanding are the organ for things created and made,—still even of this there is a knowledge to be had before it can have any influence over the soul or life of man. It must be studied where it lies revealed in the Word of God,—it must be received by faith into the inward parts of the soul, there to work its natural effect, and afterward come forth in word and deed with its natural demonstration. So that knowledge of things believed of God, as well as knowledge of things visible and experienced of God, is necessary before any act of worship or of obedience can proceed. And ignorance is the mother of many things towards men, with which purblind man is fain to be content, but of nothing towards God is it the mother except sin, dishonour, condemnation, and wrath. And therefore, before you praise the Most High, or pour out your souls in His holy presence, be sure that you know and believe that He is, and what He is, and wherein consisteth that excellency of being which calls forth your admiration and praise. For St Peter says, "Add to your faith knowledge," or know Him in whom you have believed, and know those things which He hath delivered unto you; and St Paul prayed for his converts, that their souls might be enriched with all knowledge and spiritual understanding, and exhorts them to the remembrance of those doctrines which he had taught, saying, "By which ye are saved, if ye keep in mind the things which I delivered unto you." But the knowledge of God, as manifested by His only-begotten Son, and revealed by the Spirit to the prophets and apostles,—the various truths concerning creation, providence, redemption, and everlasting salvation set forth in the Holy Scriptures,—do form, if I may so speak, but the rude and raw materials out of which the living temple of the renewed heart is built up for the spiritual sacrifice of praise. For though, as hath been said, no honest praise can be bestowed upon

anything whereof we know not the properties, the mere knowledge of its properties will not alone suffice to produce in us admiration and praise. To know certain things is to despise them, to know others is to hate them, to know others is to pity and compassionate them, and so on through all the conditions of dislike into which the soul is cast by the perception of outward things. There are an infinite number more of qualities to which the soul is indifferent, and of which, therefore, it is content to remain in ignorance. And even of those to which it draws with sympathy, there are few which it feels called upon to exult over and praise. Some it adheres to with a slight social affection, to others it joins itself in friendship, and to others it knits itself in closest bonds of love. But those forms of attachment do not yet arise into the strain of praise. Praise in opposition to blame we bestow upon them; but this is only the praise of approbation, which hath little kindred with the praise of our Creator. This aims above the strain of love, and requires to be conjoined with the sincerity and ardour of affection, the exhilaration of joy, the exaltation of the mind, the seizure of the imagination, the ravishment of the soul, a certain astonishment of the faculties of thought, and an enthusiasm of the faculties of feeling, which is not produced upon man save when he is wholly engrossed and taken up with some grand and mighty object. When something stupendous is presented to his eye, or some most full and overpowering melody to his ear,—when his imagination is carried to soaring flights upon the wings of genius, or his heart is captivated with the account of some mighty act of devotion,—when his energies are wound up to some dreadful enterprise, his hope upon the eve of some great disclosure, or his fear stands trembling upon the edge of some precipice from which, by a most unexpected providence, it is delivered,—when plucked like a brand from the burning, or fallen from a wreck in the midst of the stormy wave, and placed in a sure place;—when such events as these occur, they bring the soul into conditions analogous to that which should possess it when celebrating the mighty Lord, who is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.

To the knowledge, therefore, of His nature gathered out of

those three books,—the book of revelation, the book of creation, and the book of providence,—there must be added many thoughts and meditations thereon, much exercise and discipline of the soul therewith, before any effect will be produced capable of throwing the mind into those moods which are proper for the God of our salvation. The judgment must ponder the lessons which have been learned of His mighty acts,—it must weigh them against those actions upon the earth which breed admiration: His doings as a man of war, by His name the Lord of hosts, when He overthrew Pharaoh in the Red Sea, and the Assyrians in the dead of night, and smote the Amalekites and the nations of Canaan; His doings as a deliverer of His people from the hands of the enemy,—of Israel out of the hands of Pharaoh and out of the hands of Haman, of David from his persecutors, of Daniel from the lions' den, and of the three children from the sevenfold fierceness of the fiery furnace; His doings as a faithful friend, when He preserved Joseph from the house of his father in order by him to preserve the house of his father; when he preserved Moses from his childhood, and brought David from feeding sheep, and the apostles from being fishermen of the Galilean lake to convert the world;—all these His wonderful acts unto the children of men, the judgment must weigh against those puny and imperfect works of men to which it yieldeth the incense of its praise; and perceiving these to be as the small dust of the balance, it must keep and reserve itself for the admiration and praise of Him whom alone it becometh the comprehensive soul of man to exalt. And those actions of men which we do behold and admire, what are they but a little of His power conceded for the accomplishment of His everlasting purposes; so that, like the subalterns or soldiers of an army, they do but carry into effect the prearranged conceptions of the Lord of the hosts of men. Then the reason of man should strive to take measure of the wisdom of God, which, though it exalt itself above the clouds, and hide its head in light which is inaccessible, is still in its visible and comprehensible part so excellent as to amaze the faculties of the mind. The wisdom of things created and made, their skilful contrivance, whether you pry with the microscope into

the subtlest parts of subtlest things, or with the telescope take the scope and depth of the starry heavens,—whether you regard the things which fluctuate and change at every instant upon the outward surface of things, or the solid things themselves which undergo no perceptible change,—whether you mark the effects of seasons, or the slighter effects of day and night, or, rising into higher science, mark by distant periods the libration of the solar system, or the slight shiftings of the fixed stars,—whether, with Newton, you resolve all their motion by the law of the fallen stone, and weigh the several planets in a balance, or with a gauge try the stability of the whole system, and put it to the proof of calculation as you would an orrery or any other mechanical instrument,—examine how much it will give in one direction and find its counteraction in another, and so work out the great result that it is stable, and hath in it no principle of self-destruction, but will endure until the same arm which constructed it take it to pieces again;—in whichever way you search into the wisdom of the invisible God, as manifested in His wonderful works, you are fain to cry out, "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

And again, if from this we turn to the visits He hath paid to men, from time to time, by His ministering servants, and finally by His own Son, and consider the wisdom of the written Word, the soul is filled with a delight more inward, more conscious, (if I may so speak,) and therefore more full of joy. Oh, if I were to speak of the majestic apparitions of Jehovah in the days of old, and the words which have proceeded out of His mouth, since the promise first given in the garden of Eden down to the end of His revelation in Patmos; of the pleasure which the souls of righteous men have taken in the psalms of David, and the wisdom of Solomon; of the majesty of each prophet in his kind, and of the fulness of wisdom which is in Christ Jesus, and the teaching of His Holy Spirit, time would fail me for the task.

The wisdom of all these things created and revealed having been weighed and compared with anything wrought by the soul of man, we are taught to refrain our high commendations of poets and philosophers and sages, or to honour them in a lower degree, as themselves the workmanship of the invisible God, and reserve the elevations of our soul, the ecstasies of our joy, the exuberances of our feeling, and the ardour of our heart, for the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, who alone doth wonders, that excelleth in glory, and speaketh words which surpass in wisdom.

But these contemplations of God, however high and elevated, and however they fill the various chambers of the mind, and cause it to overflow with utterances of admiration and praise, are not of themselves able to produce the highest frames of the soul with which our Maker should be served. To these must be added feelings of our personal obligation, produced by the study of those things for which we are beholden to Him as individuals, and which constitute Him our Father, our Redeemer, our God, and our King,—the preservation of our past lives, our deliverance in perils, our escapes from temptations, our thousand meals of meat, and ten thousand inward feelings of happiness, and ten thousand times ten thousand active cogitations of the mind,—our fears which He hath made to miscarry, our griefs which He hath turned into joys, and our adversities which He hath converted to advantages, —our dear parents and tender relatives, our kind friends and forgiving enemies;—these the good gifts of His providence to us who have been a stiffnecked and rebellious generation, and who would not have Him to reign over us, must likewise be remembered in order to add the enthusiasm of gratitude and of confidence and love, to the admiration and astonishment produced by the study of His wonderful works, and the knowledge of His most excellent wisdom.

But there is a part of the mind more influential still which requireth to be touched ere we be altogether wound up and addressed to the praise of our God; which are the affections of the new man created in righteousness and true holiness. If the soul hath been converted from the service of Satan to serve the living God, and have the sense of His everlasting

favour through the atonement of Christ; if, from being rebellious, she hath become obedient, and from being wilful and obstinate, hath become gentle and docile to the word of God; if she have become merciful from being proud, meek from being high-minded, holy from being sinful, temperate from being lustful, and through all the various faculties of her nature, regenerated in the image of God;—then it cometh to pass that not only as a creature to a great and mighty Creator, or as a fool before the Perfection of wisdom, or as a blind mole before the Father of lights, but as a son before a Father, as a captive before a Redeemer, as a doomed criminal before a Saviour, she rejoiceth with fulness of joy, and hath a peace which passeth all understanding, and which the world cannot give and which it cannot take away. These personal experiences of God as our Preserver from the snares of this world, and as our Redeemer from the thraldom of sin, and our portion for evermore, being added to the former estimation of His counsels and His acts, and all growing out of the rich and liberal knowledge which is to be found written of Him in the books of revelation, creation, and providence, do work up the whole man to those high elevations with which it is comely to serve the living God, and with the service of which He is well pleased. Praise produced by the intermingling of these various feelings is acceptable praise. And when the soul is full of such knowledge and such feeling, it is never weary of praise. And it is only because of our ignorance of God and preoccupation with visible things that we praise Him not with a constant song, with a constant dedication of all our powers to His holy service.

But alas! instead of drinking at the true fountains of praise, and obtaining thence the exhilaration of soul and cheerfulness of heart, the joy and rejoicing which would make the praise of the Lord necessary to our very existence, we surrender ourselves up to various low spheres of thought and observation, filling our minds with the knowledge of some portion of His creatures, exercising our souls with the delight thereof, until they come to occupy the place of the Creator; and instead of being thankful to God for the delight which He hath made them to yield, and deriving from them an occasion of praising

Him, our fallen nature devoteth itself to the sensual visible thing,—to the creature-comfort, the heart's ease, the soul's delight, instead of arising to the Creator. We wed ourselves to those transient forms of pleasure, we give our mind to their study, and our heart to their enjoyment; all those sensibilities which were formed for the Creator are intercepted by the creature; we grovel upon the earth, are of the earth, earthy; we never know the dignity of our being, and die in the pit in which we were born, without any newness of life begun here, or any expectancy of life hereafter. Some men of the lowest condition will apply themselves to and grow skilled in things of the lowest kind, and extol the meats and the drinks of which they daily partake, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame; to whom it is like life from the dead to have tidings of a feast, and to prepare for it is their joy, to go up to it their delight; the savour and relish of it is their ecstacy, and the enjoyment of it the devout worship of their soul; to be filled with it is their benignity and peace, and to talk of it afterwards the refreshment and delight of their brutal being. This swinish bestiality of nature hath been begotten by the knowledge and understanding of things sensual, and must be cast out by the understanding and relish of things spiritual, by the knowledge of God's nature and excellency in all parts of His dominions, and the cultivation of those parts of our nature which long after higher and better things than those created and made. Above this idolatry of the appetites, there is the idolatry of our outward estate, whether it consists in our personal beauty or accomplishments, in our manners, our attire, our wealth and inheritance, our reputation or our influence; upon the excellences of which the mind brooding, becomes so delighted as to forget the duty of gratitude to God, and the becomingness of modesty, and breaks forth, whenever occasion offers, into ascriptions of praise to these transient and unprofitable creatures. One to his horses, another to his dogs; one to his house and wide domain, another to the profits of his speculations; one to his gracefulness of person, and another to his accomplishments of mind,—will pour out those strains of an exulting and triumphing soul,

which they find not in all the services of public or of private worship. O brethren, if we plead off from so vain a parade of our estimable qualities, who is he that can plead off from the silent meditation of the same, or say that his chief hopes and fears and desires are embarked therein, or deny the delight which he hath when they prosper, the blank disappointment when they decline and fall away? which, if we speak not out, do we not manifest them by signs stronger and less equivocal than speech, by display of them in our person and our equipage, by our proud bearing to those who have them not, and our courtesy to those whom God hath honoured with like honour as ourselves? A third class, again, bestow their idolatry upon something more intimate still, which the world hath not and cannot have, which is ours and no one's else, and therefore highly valued because it is our own. Every man as he hath a countenance which differeth from all men, so hath he a distinct character, a distinct history, a distinct disposition, and indeed hath every thing distinguishable from all others. Thus his personality, his egoism, or his selfishness, is dearer to him than all which he hath in common with the species. And everything he will allow to be trampled upon before he will permit this to be infringed. It is the holy of holies of a man, within which no one may presume to set foot but himself alone; and as the high priest entered not into the holy of holies without incense, so we hardly enter into our holy of holies save for the purposes and with the instruments of self-adoration. I myself, my opinions, my gestures, my schemes, my feelings, my experiences, how highly these preponderate in my mind, and how magnificent in the minds of others, who are in like manner occupied and taken up with themselves! As we walk along the street, and sit unoccupied at home, and lie awake upon our pillow, and converse with a friend, or even with one who hardly hears it, this personality hath its homage and its ascriptions of praise. It takes alarm on the slightest aggression, hath pleasure to hear another's invaded, but as death hateth an invasion upon itself. In high life it is called a man's honour, in middling life a man's character, and in low life a man's honesty. It is the

root of malice and injustice, the source of strifes and quarrels,—its service is oaths and blows, its incense blood.

These and the other idolatries which occupy the soul of men, and cheat the Creator of His homage and His praise, are all preceded by a knowledge of the thing which we idolise, and a frequent consideration of its merits, and preference of its virtues to all other things, a frequent taste of its enjoyments, and dedication to its service. For from the lowest to the highest of these idolatries there are some charms for which they are valued. The idolatry of the body and the things of the body ariseth in the first instance from the pleasure there is in those bodily sensations which are called health, and the hatred of those which are called disease; this being much thought upon keeps away the thought of higher pleasure, and induces a love of pleasant sensations in general—of the savour, of the taste, and of the palate; and then a most studious care of bodily health is often punished by that which is the destruction of health, the studious desire of corporal pleasures. Again, the idolatry of outward things ariseth from the pleasure which we have in society, in approbation, and in ease. Whatever contributes to the good opinion of others we therefore covet, and possessing we adore. Knowing nothing higher than the approval of our brethren, we seek outward and inward commendations which we may display before them, and which we know they are prone to admire and exalt. And having found them, we bring them forward into the great mart of opinion and display; and being passed current with those amongst whom we have cast our lot, we are satisfied; being admired, we are exceedingly delighted; and where our heaven of delight is, there our heart being also, we have no regards, but cold, formal, and conventional ones, for God and the things of God. The third kind of idolaters perceiving how fluctuating and uncertain are those things which can be outwardly gazed on, how versatile is the public voice, and how helpless to a man in his greatest straits, make a more noble deduction, and observing those parts over which others have no influence, they address their observations to those things which are purely selfish,—their own estimation,

their own inward praise, their own good condition in respect of knowledge and understanding and conscience. These are the epicures of the soul, if I may so speak, as the first were of the body. And though each of the three veins be shallow and unproductive of the true ore of manhood, this surely is the richest of the three; but though the richest it is the most difficult to work, and, if I may keep up the figure, splits into various veins of various degrees of impurity; but when the right one is hit on, as by the fathers of the stoical philosophy, it is the far noblest vein of character which man can work. But if from the first class come forth all those forms of voluptuaries who are devoted to the refinements of the sense, each in his beastly kind, after that sense to which he devotes the immortal soul he is possessed of; and if out of the second class of idolaters come those tribes of vain showmen and showwomen, the *figurante* and performers upon the stage of life, who die like the butterfly in their season, and come forth decked again in their showy trains, to be gazed upon and praised, vain children of Belial, by children of Belial admired, and by Belial hereafter to be exalted to his limbo of vanity, there to live in heartless vanities, in reproaches, in exposures, and in false flatteries, to all eternity;—then there come out of the third class of idolaters selfish men of every name; selfish in their opinion, that is bigots; selfish in their benefits, that is certain of a return; selfish in their schemes, that is dark intriguers; selfish in their gains, that is monopolisers; selfish in their pursuits, that is malcontents; selfish in their speeches, that is churls; and, finally, selfish in their joys and pleasures, that is misers and misanthropes.

But it is not to describe nor yet to malign these three forms of idolatry to which the world is devoted, that we introduce the notice of these remarks into the body of this discourse concerning the praise of God, but to teach you the truth of that doctrine which we laid down before—that praise is not the beginning of our acquaintance with the thing which is praised, but is the result of much knowledge of its nature, of much understanding of its secrets, of much preference, and of much enjoyment,—the result of long acquaintance and intercourse of the soul with that thing to which

it devotes itself. The idolater of the body cares not for the name of sensualist or voluptuary, which is bestowed upon him from without; he separates to his own little circle of joyful companions, who retire from the world's observation and obloquy, that they may worship their deity in peace. And, in like manner, the worshippers of approbation care not that they are looked upon and laughed at by the philosophic worshippers of the perfection of human nature, but betake themselves to their theatres of display, where they may have the matter to themselves. And so it is throughout, each associates with his fellow; they exhort one another; they entice one another to the mysteries of their worship; they keep each other in countenance, and by constant anticipation, engagement, or recollection, they contrive to exclude every other concern from their minds.

Now, from all this would I learn wisdom as to the way in which we should be delivered from these idolatries, whose end is damnation, and should grow into the worship and praise of the only living and true God. Another kind of knowledge must be sought than the knowledge with which we become acquainted by our natural education, this world's school; for that knowledge in which they encourage each other leadeth directly unto one or other of those damnable heresies and detestable idolatries which we have been recounting. The knowledge of God must be sought elsewhere than, as it is, as an ingredient in the mass of floating opinions, into the knowledge of which men grow as they grow into the knowledge of their bodies, and of their minds, and of the outward world; which knowledge, being had from the Word of God, must enter into debate with the adverse knowledge which we have elsewhere, and, being approved by the judgment of the mind and advanced into the first place of our opinion, it must act upon the will; and the will must direct the practical experiment, and, the experiment being made, the soul must taste the fruit of it;—which fruit of the knowledge and obedience of God being found profitable and pleasurable to the soul, it will be encouraged to undertake again, and again to be filled with satisfaction, and again and again, until by gradual custom former things become old, and all things become new;

the tastes of the old man die away, and new tastes are begotten; and with new tastes, new desires and new enjoyments and new expectations, and a new manner of existence, both inwardly and outwardly;—which regeneration, as it gradually proceedeth, makes the name of God to be loved, and His character to be held in reverence. We joy and rejoice in God; in Him is our confidence and our chiefest joy. We praise Him in songs, and sing of Him in psalms with sweet melody. Our souls, and all that is within, are stirred up to praise and magnify His glorious name. We praise Him in the congregation of His saints, and we praise Him in our homes, and we praise Him in our inmost soul. His name is like ointment poured forth, and His humble courts are more joyful to us than the high places of sin; and with His people we would rather suffer reproach than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; and in the light of His countenance we have more joy than when our corn and our wine and our oil do most abound.

Thus the objects of our former idolatries are covered with disgrace, and we hasten to give them to the moles and to the bats. We avoid their high places, which our souls lusted after, because there is there no reverence of our God; and their companies, who sacrifice unto the idols of vanity, or pride, or lust, we forbid our souls to desire. We walk not in their ungodly ways; we sit not in their scornful seats; and if we be found there, it is like Christians in the heathen temples, because we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no God but one; or it is like Moses in the court of Pharaoh, to warn the idolaters of the plagues, tenfold worse than Egyptian, which they shall be doomed to undergo, if they liberate not those higher capacities of their souls which now they hold in miserable thraldom. But to these, the temples of strange gods, to the feast, or to the parade, we are seldom drawn, save out of constraint of duty, or to watch over some dear soul, and expose their folly in his sight, or to keep a certain character and standing with the deluded votaries, that haply we may speak persuasively in their ear for the service of the invisible God.

The haunts and beloved abodes of the pious soul are the habitations of God's holiness, and the courts of His house,

which he rejoiceth in, as the Psalmist did in the courts of Zion. The companions of his soul are the people of God, with whom he may communicate in the praise and worship of God, and from whom he may learn new causes for which to admire and praise Him. If he contemplates the beauties of nature, the beauties of nature demonstrate to him the loveliness of their Creator. If he studies the haunts and habits of the lower creatures, they speak to him of God; and he saith, with the Psalmist, "In the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted, the birds makes their nests; as for the stork, the fir-trees are her house. The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats, and the rocks for the conies. He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field; the wild asses quench their thirst. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches." Again, if he look upon the earth, and behold the pleasant and plentiful face thereof, it teacheth him lessons of his God, and he singeth again, with the royal Psalmist, "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart." And if the pious man exalt his soul a little higher, to consider the elements of nature, as they perform their various parts in the production and preservation of things, he attunes his soul thereat, and saith unto God, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty; who coverest thyself with light as with a garment; who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain; who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters; who maketh the clouds his chariot; who walketh upon the wings of the wind; who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire; who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever; thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled, at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away." If the pious man have had experiences of prosperity, either outwardly or inwardly, either in respect to

this world or the world to come, or if, in the multitude of his thoughts within him, he meditate upon past experiences of good, then, instead of exalting himself, or expatiating in praise of fickle fortune or of blind chance, he bursteth out, and singeth aloud to God, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." And again, if he should be overtaken with adversity; if war, or pestilence, or violence, or any other calamity, should come upon his goodly condition, instead of bursting into violent execration, and resigning himself to despair, he reassureth his soul in God, and singeth aloud, "Although the fig-tree should not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." "The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places." Thus, in every case, the soul of the pious man hath a refuge in his God, and hath a song to sing unto the praise of his God. He ceaseth not day nor night to celebrate His praise; his soul dwelleth evermore at ease, and rejoiceth in God, saying, "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be delivered from all mine enemies round about, and brought at length to the habitation of His holiness, to abide for ever and ever."

IV.

HEB. X. 25.

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.

HAVING treated already of the foundations upon which the praise of God should be built up within the heart, I should now proceed to the subject of praising God in the congregation of His saints, which the Psalmist recommends as comely, and which the apostle requires us not to forsake, but that I perceive the previous question of social religion in general, to which I would now address myself; for there have been in all ages instances, as there seem to have been many in the apostolic, of a total neglect of social acts of worship; and these not instances of profane and worldly men, who, having no religion personally, cannot be expected to have any socially, but of most devout and pious men,—Milton, for example,—who have been contented, under some strong prejudice, we conceive, to live in neglect of this, if not necessary, most consolatory, edifying, and fruitful part of religion.

And inasmuch as there are no express commandments given in Scripture upon this subject, it is the more necessary to examine into the principles of human nature upon which it is founded; for something reasonable there must be, and something singularly useful in that which, in all ages and in all countries, hath, with the exceptions alluded to above, universally prevailed. Now, in looking into the nature of man to discover whence the social worship of God derives this universal sanction of his practice, I perceive that it is a universal fact, holding not of religion merely, but of every feeling and affection of the breast, to seek for and discover those in whom a similar feeling and affection is present, and

to join with them in society, which societies delight to hold frequent assemblies and congregations for the purpose of encouraging each other in the enjoyment and cultivation of that feeling which they have in common. There is a part of human nature which draws man asunder from his fellow, and engages him with his own peculiar interests and affairs, which isolates him, and arms him in his own behalf, out of which grows the feeling of property and personal right, and also of justice, and from the excess of which come pride, envy, jealousy, cunning, and every form of malice and malignity. And to work against this, and hinder it from these fearful issues, there is another part of human nature which draws him to his kind, which makes him thirst for fellowship and communion with kindred spirits, and which binds him in a thousand associations, out of which arise some of the most exquisite enjoyments of his life,—a principle of attraction and communication diverse from and opposite to the other, by which he is carried away from himself, and made to have pleasure in the giving to others of that which by his own private industry he hath acquired.

Is knowledge that upon which he hath set his heart?—then he removes himself from affairs, and shuts himself up from company, and subjecteth youthful passions, and abstracteth himself from places of youthful gaiety and folly, that he may dig the mines of knowledge, which are better than the mines of gold, and carry on the merchandise of wisdom, which is better than the merchandise of silver; and thereto he hath the convenience of a college cell, within gates which are shut betimes as carefully as a besieged city, it being well thought by the fathers and founders of learning that the outward world is not more adverse to knowledge than to true religion. Here he trims his midnight lamp, and paleth the bloom of his youthful cheek; he stinteth himself of sleep, his books are his silent company, the thoughts of the learned are his banquet. His inward man engrosses him; his outward man often altogether neglected, health itself hardly cared for, while he is passing through the chrysalis state of the mind, and obtaining for his soul that plumage which shall bear it into regions of thought and

fancy hitherto unexplored, and reward him with discoveries hitherto unknown, and weave a chaplet of laurel for his brow, and bequeath unto his name an immortality of fame! But if I keep my eye upon the bookworm, and follow him onward through the more advanced stages of knowledge, then I perceive the selfish, the avaricious, and the monopolising feeling which moved him to such sacrifice of time, pleasure, and health, begin to abate as he becomes well fraught and stored; and as if God used his soul for a transport vessel, which doubtless He doth, he is driven with his spirit full of knowledge to carry the same abroad to communicate it to his fellows. He no sooner discovers truth than he hastens to reveal it; he no sooner detects errors than he hastens to warn the world of them; he joins himself to the societies of the learned, he enters into fellowships, and academies, and colleges; he meditates in his mind, and stirs up his stores; he writes books, and communicates his gathered knowledge to all mankind. So that, in the first instance, while there is nothing so avaricious as the spirit of knowledge, there is in the next instance nothing so generous. It reveals, without being put to the question. It bestows, without being besought. The more precious its discoveries, the more it hastens to make them common.

If, again, I consider the pursuit of wealth, then I perceive a like counterpoise of the selfish and the social. The merchant and tradesman are indefatigable, making the most of every occasion, and driving every bargain with a nicety as if their all was at stake. They measure with exactness, they weigh out scrupulously, they gather up the remnants of things, and suffer nothing to be lost. They introduce an economy of time into their business, almost as if every day were the last; they lay off their several branches each to a several hand, and then they ply it at their department with a haste and with an accuracy which nothing can surpass. Their books are kept like the book of fate. Every man's account is there as if it were the book of divine remembrance. Not an error through the whole year escapes their pen, and when the balance is struck, it turns out just and exact to the uttermost farthing. And to see them here in the work

of accumulation you would suppose every man a niggard, a miser—who could part with nothing, and who could not bear that any day should be lost. But this is only half the man. To know him wholly you must see the other half likewise in action. Follow him from his workshop to his home, and you will see a spirit of profusion, equalled only by the spirit of accumulation, and often, to his misfortune, not equalled by that. Here is generosity in every form. It is lavished on elegances of the house, on attendants, on equipage, on sensual enjoyments, on magnificent schemes of pleasure, on churches, on subscriptions, on every profuse, liberal, and noble undertaking. Insomuch that those men who in the morning gathered with a hundred hands, in the evening scatter with a hundred hands that which they gathered, and are, under the providence of God, but instruments for changing the current of His beneficence,—for gathering it when otherwise it would be wasted, and bestowing it where it could not otherwise be had. He gathereth it at a thousand fountains, as the streams which come out of the recesses of a thousand solitudes are gathered into one lake; then he dispenseth it through the fertile plains of society, and setteth in action and encourageth a thousand departments of business, just as if you should sluice off that lake into a thousand rills, with each of which to fertilise a productive field, or give force to the wheel of some active machine.

Again, of present well-being, which includeth all other instances, except that of religion, to which these instances are to be applied;—of well-being this also is the law, that though it requireth of a man much cogitation of his own mind, and much activity of every power, he can by no means have any portion of it without bestowing it also upon another. Can a man be just (and that is one great part of well-being) without benefiting every man with whom he transacteth? Can a man be quiet and peaceable (which is another part of well-being) without blessing all over whom he hath an influence? He cannot be a good husband without blessing his wife, or a good father without blessing his children, or a good master without blessing his servants, or a good neighbour without blessing the country

round. And yet, without being a good father, husband, master, and neighbour, no man can have any measure of well-being. Another great point of well-being is liberty, for want of which all the world groaneth, save two or three blessed spots. Now, consider this well, for it is a nice illustration of the thing in hand. Liberty or freedom we can by no means have without a great confederation in its behalf. A man cannot have it all to himself. But in order to have any, he must be liberal to all around. There must be equal laws, and no partiality in their administration. There must be a body of equal rights, in order that the privileges and prerogatives of every order may be respected. If there be slavery, it must die in the progress of freedom. Every man must be respected in his place, and in his place defended; his blood must be as precious in the sight of the people as if it were royal blood, his little cottage as sacred as a palace, his staff as secure to him as a monarch's sceptre, and his peasant's cap as sacred as the royal crown. There must be a common wealth, a common law, a common right, all before any particular man, high or low, can be secured in his well-being.

All these are illustrations of a general principle, that to all good and prosperous conditions of the mind or of the outward estate, both the selfish and the social must conduce. In knowledge, in wealth, and in well-being, there is an exercise of both. The state of learning, the state of merchandise, the state of civil society, standeth well only by the active cultivation of both; and, in short, the life of every well-conditioned man consisteth in the well-balanced play of both the selfish and sympathetic parts of his nature.

In knowledge, if a man, while he zealously makes acquisition, takes no pains to communicate what he acquires, but broods upon it himself, without trying conclusions upon it with the fellows and companions of his studies, then he becomes opinionative; he sees everything as a part of himself, and himself in everything; and in the end a confirmed pedant is formed, a narrow-minded bigot, and, if he have the power, a persecutor for conscience' sake. Next, again, if a man, while he is zealously accumulating, adding penny to

penny, and pound to pound, and is at no pains to expend and give forth in some proportion to his accumulations, then, for want of other pleasures and gratifications, his chief delight is in the very act of accumulation; it grows upon him, and engrosses his own soul; he becomes a miser, grudging himself, and churlish to all around—a poor man in the midst of wealth; a beggar, and worse than a beggar—for a beggar can enjoy his scanty earnings in the midst of abundance. Again, if in his schemes a man communicates little with his fellows, but works by his own address and penetration, —turning, as he would say it, with his own arm the wheel of his own destinies,—then, what doth he become but a misanthrope, a churl, whose sour blood no kindness can sweeten? Nay, even in benevolence a man may be selfish, and so plant a thorn in that finest blossom of the heart. For, in his pride, have I often seen a spirit of great kindness refuse to make his good feelings known,—steal to his object unperceived, bestow upon it under promise of perfect secrecy; thus hiding two good things—goodness in himself, and gratitude in him to whom he hath been kind, and subjecting the benefited to a tyranny, the tyranny of silence, over that which of all things the heart bursteth to acknowledge. Meanwhile the iron man sitteth *cap-à-pie* in his pride, his soul boasting itself against those who do these kindnesses only to be talked of. But time would fail me to describe those who, being selfish in their joys, become the basest of epicures; who, being selfish in their spirit, become churls; who, being selfish in their pursuits, become malcontents; and, selfish in their ambition, become dark intriguers. And so on through all the varieties of human life, wherever the companionable and social part is wanting, there cometh every form of degraded and wicked characters.

Now, what is religion but a new object with which a man occupies his thoughts, a new pursuit to which he turneth all the energies of his mind; which hath in it a body of new knowledge—the knowledge of God and of divine wisdom; which hath in it a new world of gain—the salvation of the soul, and the treasures which are in heaven; and a new prin-

ciple of well-being—perfect peace of conscience, the renewing of the whole soul in the image of God, and deliverance from the power of sin? This new science, new gain, and new well-being, which religion is, must be obtained and occupied in the same way as those visible forms of knowledge, gain, and well-being with which the sons of men are taken up, and which we have shewn are first prosecuted as private concerns, and, as they accumulate, are not stored up, but communicated to others, with a liberality proportionate to that wherewith God communicateth them to us. In which communication the social and benevolent part of our nature is cultivated, while the personal and selfish part is cultivated by the acquisition of them. Now, human nature operating upon this new object, proceedeth after precisely the same fashion as in the old; and if it do not, is liable to the same evils which we have shewn it is liable to in the former instances. For though religion be as to its origin supernatural, and in its great and leading truths not discoverable by reason, but revealed to faith; yet, being received by faith into the mind, it doth work effects not against the natural laws of the mind, but in conformity therewith, and hath therefore those analogies of which we are now endeavouring to establish one of the most important. As in the merchandise of knowledge and of wealth, and also of well-being, it is necessary that we first attend to accumulation before we can have wherewith to indulge the social and communicative part of our nature; so this in religion is also the first thing to be attended to. And for want of attention here, it generally happens that we have in these social meetings the form only, and none of the substance of religion to communicate. Until religion be made a personal question,—until we seek for ourselves, with all our faculties, that knowledge of God which is unto life everlasting, and cultivate for ourselves those fruits of the Spirit which are alone able to cast out the lusts and affections of the old man, it is vain to think that we can have any desire for religious converse, or any longing after social worship, or anything upon which to communicate with others, except the outward forms and customs of religion. To these, indeed, we may yield a reverence, because it is

the order of the time and place in which we live; but take us to a place of which it is not the order, and we fall away from the desire; or set us by a sick-bed, where religion is craved for; or place us in a company of saints, where religion is conversed of, and we find no words because we have no feelings, and we have no store of feelings because we have not yet made it a personal and private pursuit to obtain them.

Therefore, in order to the obtaining of any communion or fellowship upon the subject of religion,—any distribution of it from one to another, or any combination of it from the hearts of many to present it in full congregation before the throne of God,—any burst of united feeling, with which the ear of the Almighty may be well pleased,—any united groan, as of a whole people, over their sinfulness in His sight,—any general fast, or universal humiliation of a whole land, as a trespass-offering, or any jubilee of gratitude and joy for an offering of thankfulness,—or any great movement of heart, and soul, and hand for Jehovah, as at the reformation of the Church;—ere holocausts and hecatombs of the soul like these can be offered unto the King of saints, there must have been a warfare waged in every breast of the congregation, or assembly, or nation,—a uniformity of feeling towards God, a common devotion, which, being struck by the spark of God's providence, bursteth forth into those explosions of natural feeling, which, being called upon Sabbath after Sabbath, brings forth that spiritual worship with which the Lord is well pleased, and for which He blesseth all the land in which it is offered up. Therefore, in order to the full development of social religion, it is necessary to dwell upon this personal religion, without which the other is naught but formality or hypocrisy.

But so strong is the social principle within the nature of man, that whatever he has in common with another attracts him to his society; and thus are formed the various societies, from the great political associations down to the smallest and lowest society in this metropolis, which are so numerous, to its high praise be it spoken, that in science there is hardly a branch, in jurisprudence there is hardly a department, in

philanthropy there is hardly a walk, in the large catalogue of human sufferings and wants there is hardly an individual instance, for watching over and waiting upon which there are not associations, voluntarily formed, of members the most diverse in rank, pursuit, disposition, and everything, save that particular liking and inclination for the ends of which they are associated together. It may be laid down, therefore, as a great principle in human nature, that when men feel anything in common, this kindred feeling draws them together, at the sacrifice of their private convenience, and even of their private interests, to form themselves into communities and corporations, of which the standing rule is to foster that sympathy which drew them together.

Now the question becomes, Doth religion engender in the bosoms of men any such common sympathies of the soul as should lead them out of the way of their worldly interests to congregate for communion and fellowship? That it doth engender sympathies of the strongest and largest kind, it will now be our endeavour to shew. First, It teacheth a common knowledge which is not once talked of in all the schools, and which had been hidden from the beginning of time: the knowledge of the only true God, the Creator and Preserver of the world; the knowledge of the original dignity and purity of human nature, and our present fallen state; the knowledge of the Son of God the Redeemer, and of the Spirit of God the Sanctifier; the knowledge of life and immortality beyond death and the grave, of the resurrection of the body, and of the eternal judgment. This science of Christian doctrine, theology, as it is nobly named,—not the theology of any sect, which is but a fragment of the whole, but the theology of revelation, which will bear searching into, and will reward the research, and fill the mind with most unerring and ennobling truth;—this science none of the schools possesseth; it is not in the classics of Greece and Rome, nor in the philosophy of the east or west; it is not to be detected by the interpretation of Egyptian hieroglyphics, nor discovered in the historic and antiquarian monuments of any people save only of the people of God. And if each earthly science, whose limitations are narrow, and which sustaineth but intervals of time,

be the rallying point of all who follow after or have possessed them, why this highest knowledge, which is conversant with the eternal and unchangeable and invisible, and affecteth our present and everlasting estate, why this knowledge alone should not congregate its followers and possessors together, the one to listen, the other to expound it, I see not, if human nature be not altogether revolutionised. But the community of knowledge is the least part of the Christian bond. After it, there cometh the community of divine law. For God hath laid down a law, new and to the world unknown, until it pleased Him to bring it from the secret place of His counsels;—a law which is holy, just and good, and accommodated to the predispositions which the hand of the Creator hath impressed upon man; which consisteth not in a few outward visible ordinances, but looketh inward upon the soul; which doth not overawe, put under, or enslave the soul, but seeks to deliver it out of the hand of its sinful masters, and bring it into divine liberty. It is not a law without previous assent, to which we are bound by fear or bribed by advantage, but a law whose reward is in keeping it, whose recommendation is its suitableness to all our conditions, and which captivates the full consent of heart and soul, and strength and mind. Exact justice, which is the perfection of human laws, is only, as it were, the foundation-stone of the divine law, whose superstructure and details lie all in the region of charity and love, upon which human laws venture not. For it is not a rule only against injustice, but against unkindness, against uncharitableness and disaffection of every kind. In short, it is the exposition of whatever conduceth to peace and unity, the hindrance of whatever bringeth on strife, quarrel, and disagreement. The province of human laws is to right the wronged, and arbitrate disputes; the province of divine law is to prevent wrongs, and propagate peace. The one is the remedy of an evil, the other is the preventative of the evil, and the propagation of good. Now, if, as hath been seen, community of law and privilege unites mankind in bonds, and brings them often together out of the love they have to hear right expounded and see it carried into practice; I see not, unless by a revolution in human

nature, that those who live under the new law of love, so different from the laws under which as men we live, should not thereby have generated within their bosom the feelings of a peculiar people, the desire of frequent fellowship with one another, frequent assemblies that they might hear this Divine law of the soul expounded, and applied to the several conditions of life in which they stand. If the laws of Moses, notwithstanding their many burdensome exactions and tedious ceremonies, did engender such a national feeling as kept the people in close union, and preserved them amongst many enemies, and preserves them still, scattered as they are among the nations; how much more shall the laws of Christ, purifying the hearts and sweetening the intercourse of His people, draw them apart from the fickle laws of fashion, or the outward formal laws of the state, and bind them together by every kindly feeling of brotherhood, after they have eradicated the hostile and envious principles of which the heart is full?

Then there is next—to draw these together, and form them into congregations for serving and praising God—the new government of Christ under which they live. The outward protection of fleets and armies and national defences, the inward superintendence of magistrates, from him that sitteth upon the throne to his lowest vicegerent, the Christian regardeth no higher than as instruments in the hand of God for accomplishing His ends, and as such treateth them with honour, and submitteth to them, so far as his conscience and the law of God permit. But his defence is Jehovah's right arm, and the shadow of Jehovah's wings is his covert. The king whom he serveth is the Lord Jesus, to whom he looketh for protection, and by whom he is protected, even by Him unto whom God hath given the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. In respect to his outward estate, and the safety of his person, and the preservation of his liberty, he looketh to that institution which the providence of God hath placed him under; but for his inward estate, the safety of his soul and the preservation of its liberty and health, he looketh unto Christ, the Author and the Finisher of his faith.

Though an inhabitant of the earth, his citizenship is in heaven, whence he looks for the Saviour. He is a pilgrim passing through the wilderness to a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. He looketh not on things seen and temporal, but upon things spiritual and eternal; he walketh by faith and not by sight.

Therefore, to have any social religion which is worthy of the name, each man must begin at home in his own bosom, and set all his faculties to work upon the Holy Scriptures, in order to fill himself with the knowledge of God, and the law of holiness, and the redemption from sin and misery, and the new objects of thought, feeling, and affection which it containeth. He must imbue his soul therewith, he must brood thereon, he must know it thoroughly, he must feel it heartily, he must approve it cordially, he must desire it wistfully, he must engross it in the most sacred places of his soul; for while it is an object contemplated outside of him, looked at and studied, it will avail him little. He must seek to have the Holy Spirit within himself. The spirit of the law he must embosom, the well-spring of obedience he must contain. There must be formed a new nature within the shell of his old nature, a new heart, a right spirit; a ray of new light must illumine his understanding, a divine mastery must overrule his will. The inward man must be wrought into the image of God, that the outward man may come forth conformable to the outward law of God.

There is an outward law of God, and there is the Spirit of God, of which that outward law is the expression. There is a revealed word of God, but there is an eternal Word, which was in the beginning with God, which was God, of which that revealed word is but the voice. These eternal realities must be sought after. God did not mean that man should plod on like a slave by rule, and work up against the stream and current of his will, but He intended that he should be filled with a divine power, under the influence of which he should sail down the pleasant stream of his inclinations and affections; that he should ascend through the written word to the eternal Word, which was made flesh, and join himself to Christ as a member of His body, become of His flesh, and of His bones;

one with Him, as He is one with God; united as the branches are to the stem of the tree, as the members are to the head. Thus hath he within himself the Spirit of revelation, the divine unction of knowledge which understandeth all things, yea, the deep things of God. Thus through the knowledge and admiration of charity, humility, meekness and mercy, and peace and gentleness, and the other revealed affections of the Holy Spirit, he must ascend to a sighing and longing after that very Spirit; he must seek for it from the throne of the Highest, he must feel for its stirrings within his own soul, he must entertain it hospitably, he must not quench it or set it at naught, but encourage it by obeying its suggestions and serving its purposes,—and thus it will work upon the heart and will, even as the Word of God worketh upon the knowledge and the conscience. And thus, as we are inwardly filled with the inspiration of the Holy One, outward things will come into order. The spirit of manifestation within will answer to the spirit of revelation without, the changed heart will speak to its affections, the enlightened conscience will speak to its opinions, the heaven-directed rule will speak to all the inward faculties, and these will speak to the outward servants, the tongue, the hands, the form, the features; and thus, out of inward motive and consent, outward visible action shall be set to right.

This inward possession of the eternal Word and living Spirit of God must be earnest, hard followed after, besought, entreated, and waited for with longing expectation, as those that watch for the coming of the morning, by every son of man. And though it be that from which God excludeth no son of man, yea, from which no son of man is by God excluded, but to which every son of man is by God invited, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath sent His only-begotten Son to be our prophet, priest, and king,—who commissioned His apostles to preach His gospel, not to a few, but to every creature under heaven,—yet it is that to which human nature is disinclined, which loveth no such revolution of its being, but would rather grovel on in its suffering, sinning estate, than essay this mighty change to which its Creator hearteneth and presseth it. It goes not with the

nature of man to be so shocked, although the shock be from Heaven. It goes not with his pride so to humble itself, with his will so to submit itself, with his affections so to change their objects, with his understanding so to change its estimates of value, with his pleasures so to turn round and retrace their course, and enter upon another bent. Man hateth it like death; and worse to him than death is this new birth, and regeneration of his nature; and the great multitude will not think of it at all; and those who do are content to understand it by the head only, and those who enter on it heartily find it a stiff and stubborn undertaking, as Paul himself testifieth in his own case, and witnesseth through all his epistles by the language in which he sets it forth, as death, crucifixion, rising from the grave, mortification, partaking of the sufferings of Christ, dying with Him, and so forth, through the whole compass of the hieroglyphical language of the New Testament.

Therefore, with more unwearied perseverance than student useth in his solitary cell, with more economy of time and value than merchant useth in his never-ending toils, with more cogitation and care than that wherewith nature useth to provide for her well-being, must each several soul for itself pursue this inward sanctification and outward obedience, seek the indwelling of the Spirit of holiness instead of the indwelling of sin, the indwelling of the Word of God instead of the indwelling of our own error and foolishness. And unless it take pains to accumulate some store of this, it is unprepared and disqualified for any social intercourse upon the subject of religion.

For all social worship is the union of heart with heart, of soul with soul, of strength with strength, of mind with mind; for with no other faculties will the Lord our God be served. It is not the harmony of many voices in praise, nor the uniting of all voices into one in prayer; it is not the uncovered head, or the reverend bending of the knee, or the heartily uttered Amen. Still less is it the noble pile of Gothic or Grecian structure, the solemn voice or becoming dress of priest, or aught else before which sentimental spirits drop languishingly down. No, verily! It may be, it hath been,

in a barn, in a cottage, under the open canopy. I myself have seen the communion administered under the vault of heaven—the communicants seated reverently around a table spread among the tombs, and the beholders seated on the tombstones of their fathers all around. And there was no accompaniment to their music but the rushing of the neighbouring stream, or the hoarse roar of the swelling sea. But when that congregation, by the nightfall—for long and unwearied was their communion service, and the people measured it not by hours, but occupied the day with its various parts, and in some places stole upon the evening—by the fall of evening twilight when that congregation lifted up their concluding hymn of joy, then the jubilee of the soul was completed. It arose into the open heavens; it swelled and echoed amongst the hills with an overpowering majesty and sweetness which tuned the heart, and wrought into harmony the discords of the soul, and which, I am sure, ascended into the ear of the omnipresent God. Oh no! my brethren; it is not the form and ceremony of the service, but it is the present Deity in every heart; it is the common inspiration of the Holy Spirit; it is the swellings of the common soul like Carmel, and the shouting of the common joy like Lebanon; —this it is which possesseth the worshippers with the sacredness of the time and place, and makes them feel, This is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven. It is then that the presence of the Lord descendeth upon the people, and filleth the temple of their hearts as once it filled the temple of Solomon, so that the priest could not stand to minister for the cloud of the glory of God with which the temple was filled.

Before there can be any union of heart, soul, strength, and mind, there must be individuals out of which that union is made; and therefore it resteth, that the first thing towards worshipping God in company is to worship Him in secret; the first thing towards communicating religious feeling to another is to possess it within ourselves; and therefore every one must become a student of Divine things, a merchant in wisdom, a searcher after spiritual welfare in the first place. And then it will come to pass, that wherever two or three are met

together, God will be in the midst of them, abundantly to bless them, and to do them good. For He cannot but be in the midst of them, being in every one of them; and Christ cannot but intercede for them, because they are His members, with whom He feels the closest sympathy; and the Spirit cannot but make intercession for them with groanings which cannot be uttered, because their prayers are His very prayers, seeing they are breathed forth of that Holy Ghost which prevaileth in each one of them over all the world and those wicked spirits with which they were naturally possessed. And their worship must be acceptable unto the Father, when it is presented by the Son and the Holy Ghost. And thus it cometh to pass that God is worshipped in spirit and in truth; and the house becometh a temple of God, though it were a lowly cottage or a rude barn, and had never known any vain rite of consecration; and the souls of the people have had a spiritual feast, and they go on their way rejoicing. They also open their ear to instruction, and they seek God in His holy Word, and they talk often one to another of the things which they experience; and the Lord hearkeneth and heareth it, and a book of remembrance is written before Him for those that fear the Lord and that think upon His name. "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not."

ON FAMILY AND SOCIAL RELIGION.

ON FAMILY AND SOCIAL RELIGION.

I.

SERVING GOD IN THE HOUSEHOLD.

JOSH. xxiv. 15.

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

WHEN I look upon a family, of father, and mother, and flourishing children, with perhaps a goodly retinue of household servants, I say unto myself, What a work of Divine providence is here, what a signal manifestation of the goodness of God! Some ten or twenty years ago, there was nothing of this substance, none of these thriving children, nor did any of those happy domestics tend the many cares of this little state. Then those who rule it in nobler state than king or queen, whose smile is the joy, whose embrace is the highest ambition of the little ones, and upon whose nod the grown-up people wait with willing attendance;—this king and queen of the hearts of all (which that father and mother are not always, is their own wicked mismanagement, for God hath designed it, and hath provided it so to be) were some few years ago in subjection to their own parents, and most frequently without anything they could call their own. The one, like young Jacob, crossing the fords of Jordan to seek his inheritance, with a staff for all his portion, ("With my

staff I passed over this Jordan;") the other, like Rebekah, waiting on her father's flock, until it might please the Lord to send her a husband and to find her a home. These two the Lord brought together, with nothing but each other's love for their portion, perhaps without a home to dwell in, or a servant to minister to them. And from these two needy dependants of the Lord's providence all this little nation hath arisen. One immortal soul after another the Lord sent them, and with every hungry mouth He sent the food to satisfy its hunger. And in coming into existence, pain and trouble and death lay in wait for mother and child, but the Lord's arm sustained both. And often against the soft childhood of the little nursling death brought up various diseases, and shot his infectious arrows abroad amongst the children, but still the Lord sustained them. And while He blessed maternal carefulness at home, He blessed paternal carefulness abroad, finding them thousands and thousands of meals, so that they consumed not faster than He supplied;—the barrel never went empty, the cruse never ran dry, the wardrobe was ever full. And oft when that mother's heart was sick with sadness, and that father's arm weary in the rough encounter of the world, and ready to resign the oar which won his children's bread, the Lord sustained their hearts, and restored their souls. And here they are, brought by the Lord into a haven of rest, and their home is a little paradise of contentment, and perhaps there is a good store provided against the future, when their children shall have ripened into manhood, perhaps there are many attendants ministering in the house, perhaps many dependants abroad, and every comfort and every luxury which the present life can enjoy. Oh, when I look upon a family thus brought out of nothing, this miracle of the Divine providence and goodness, and haply sit with them cheerfully round the evening fire, and mingle in their enjoyment; it doth so delight my heart to hear them discourse of their family difficulties—to see the eye of a father brighten while he looks upon his present happiness, and the heart of a mother glad while she beholds her children opening into the liveliness and beauty of manhood! And if they intersperse their discourse with pious thankfulness to God, and devout

acknowledgment of His goodness to them and theirs,—if they teach their children to know the Lord God of their fathers, and to walk in His ways and to keep His precepts,—if they, moreover, bow the knee in homage unto Him who feeds the raven, and clothes the lily of the field, and walk before Him in a perfect way at home; not only say with Joshua, but with Joshua perform, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord;"—when this I behold, I say unto myself, Here is the happiest scene under heaven, the true seed-bed of greatness, the nursery of heaven. To this let the palace, (as palaces are generally ordered,) to this let the senate, to this let the academy, to this let the exchange, to this let every tabernacle under which worldly interests shelter, yield. Here is the abode of my soul,—here will I rest, for I do like it well. But if it should otherwise happen that these two children of God's hand, for whom He hath builded a nest, and furnished it with plenty, and peopled it with dear children, and given it the children of others to do its servile work, forget all the doings of the Lord for them and theirs, and ascribe the glory unto themselves and unto Fortune, (that usurper who hath nothing of his own,) and boasteth that all the wealth of Providence is of his procuring;—oh, if I see this family estate, with no fear of God in the midst of them, consuming their meals with no thankfulness, rising in the morning with no prayer for counsel, and laying them down in the evening with no commendation of their spirits to God; if I hear His name passed amongst them like a household word, and His service slighted, and all the soul-cheering spirit of religion banished out of doors to dwell in the church or the cathedral,—oh, how I pity the children! They are rising for a prey to the enemy, who lieth in wait to take their souls after they have served him all the days of their life. Poor children! no one to care for their souls. Poor famished children! no spiritual food for you from the father and mother who bore you. The Lord preserve you, for your father and mother have forsaken you! The Saviour take you up, for surely ye are destitute! But for the parents—what ingrates are you! what a hardened and ungodly pair, thus to forget the Lord who found you solitary, and founded for you a habitation, and prospered you,

and gave you children, the most valuable gift! Oh, it is pitiful to be in such a house, where everything is present but piety, which is the titular saint of all household graces. It seems to me a miracle that it should stand before the Lord. And I almost look for the moment when it will disperse like an illusion. But the Lord is long-suffering and spareth much. He wisheth all to come unto Him, therefore He is kind. Oh, then, revere Him in your houses, and return Him thanks for His great mercies, and you shall dwell safely and securely in the midst of those family infirmities which we now go on to declare as arguments for a godly establishment of the household.

When I look upon this family, and further think of its risks and dangers, its hopes and fears, and all its infirmity, I pity the more that it should be without the great patronage and protection of the Almighty Father of all. The life of the industrious father and of the careful mother hang by a thread, which a thousand accidents may cut asunder; and what then is to become of the little nest? To what serve the securities upon your lives—to what your houses and lands, which have no affections to cherish kindred affections, no bosom upon which the helpless infant may hang, nor lip to impart to the ear of listening childhood maternal counsel or paternal wisdom? And what are guardians, and what wealthy relations and friends, in the stead of parents in whom God has planted the rudiments of affection, and made their ministry as necessary for the rearing of a healthy soul, as for the rearing of a healthy body, in their offspring? Each child's life contained a thousand anxious affections and precious hopes, which by death are all scattered, as a fine elixir is when the frail vessel which held it falls to the earth. And if they ripen into manhood, how many pitfalls are in their path, and most alluring seductions, wherein being caught, the hearts of the parents are oft broken, and their gray hairs brought with sorrow to the grave! And contentious feuds in families do oft slay affection, and counteract nature, so that there shall be strokes instead of embraces, and frowns for smiles, and bitter wrath for melting love. And hoping the best, that death is escaped, and vice and passion fended off, (although in the absence of

religion I see not how,) what foul winds may cross the course of the vessel in which this domestic state is embarked! Life is not a gay voyage upon the bosom of ample streams through luxuriant and beautiful fields, like that which kings and queens are reported to take at times through their ample territory; but it is a rough and traverse course amongst adverse currents and rough impediments, requiring each day a constant outlook, and ready activity of all concerned. Each post that arrives may bring to the father the heavy burden of a shipwrecked fortune, or to a mother the tidings of some scion of the house in foreign parts lopped off for ever from the parent stock. Each fair daughter, as she walks abroad, may catch the basilisk eye of some artful wretch; and each hopeful youth fall into the snares of some wicked woman, who lieth in wait for the unwary. Why should these things be hid from the thoughts of parents? Why should not all the infirmity of a family be laid open, that they may have their refuge in Jehovah's everlasting strength? Look upon this city where ye dwell. Behold the daughters of misery and vice. Was not each one of these a father's delight and a mother's joy, and the dwelling-place of as many natural affections and hopeful wishes as the daughter of a king? Each of these is a proof of a family's infirmity. And every youth who in fallen wretchedness paces these weary streets, and every haggard boy who looks into your face for charity, and the thousand striplings who prowl about and lie in wait for things not their own, having often upon their heads more capital offences than years, are all instances of domestic infirmity. And so are the lists of ruined merchants and broken traders, and the shipfuls of heavy-hearted emigrants from the various ports of this blessed island, and the large population of paupers which crowd the poorhouse, or depend upon the parish, and infinite cases more lamentable than those, which modestly hide their want, pining in secret over broken hopes and humbled fortunes, or haply relieved by the unseen hand of charity,—these are all instances of that domestic infirmity with which I now desire to impress your mind, that ye may seek your strength in Him who "placeth the solitary in families, and maketh the children of the youth to be like arrows

in the hand of a mighty man." There is refuge nowhere else against these infirmities, whether of the outward condition, or of the inward happiness of a family. In the outward infirmities, on which I insist the least, what refuge is there in the love of father or mother, or both, save in Him who is a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow, and the orphan's help? And in the ruin of our household wealth, what refuge save in the arms of His providence unto whom every creature openeth its mouth many times a day for nourishment, and findeth it either in the air or upon the earth, or in the waters under the earth? He alone can fill the house which is empty, and stock our exhausted barns, and make our presses to burst out with new wine. And when riches have taken unto themselves wings and flown away, like an eagle towards heaven, there are treasures on high, where neither moth nor rust corrupts, and where thieves break not through nor steal. But for the inward and spiritual infirmities against which it concerneth a family's weal to be defended,—against the quarrels and animosities and jealousies of husband and wife,—against the misdirected affectionateness of parents toward children, which hath the sentence of God upon it, "He that spareth the rod hateth the child," and doth more than all other things fill the asylums with lunatics, and against the quarrels of children, and family feuds of every kind;—what protecteth but the fear of God as the common head of the whole, which becometh like a centre towards which the wills of all do bend inwards, and from which they receive their directions outward? And what furnisheth the young men and young maidens against the temptations of the world, and especially of cities, which are as thickets limed by the fowler for the feet of youth? Ah! what can furnish their souls with that unfailing grace which shall preserve them from their own frailties in worldly desires, and so condition them around as that they shall grow up in the rough weather of life, and become patriarchs and matrons in their turn, and rear up a holy offspring to carry down the spiritual seed in their line till the end of time? Ah! where are those outward defences and inward supplies, save in the gift of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not? Whence are they but from the Spirit of God, who worketh in us to

will and to do of God's good pleasure? Now, which of you would wish your children to be tossed to and fro on passion's wave, shipwrecked in some of the gulfs of hell, which are sensuality, worldliness, pride, cunning, ungodliness? Who of you would have his sons strong as the lion, and his daughters pure and innocent as the virgin before whom the lion croucheth? Who would live his honourable life over again in his honourable children, and see, like Abraham or Jacob, a long line of godly sons and pious daughters? Let that man plant the roof-tree of his house in holiness, and rear its walls in integrity; let him purify its threshold three times with prayer, and make the outgoings of the evenings and the mornings to rejoice together with a holy joy and mirth-making unto the Lord. Let him make his hearth holy as an altar; let him sanctify the inmost nook of his house with prayer; let his servants be of the seed of the godly, yea, the porter of his gate let him be a brother in Christ.

Now, I have no time for digressions, but I will have no man say to me that these things are utopian. If he be a commoner who saith it, I will take him to the north and shew him the reality of which I faintly sketch the picture. Our poet hath given it not amiss, because it was in his father's house; and, poor man! in his better days, when his father was gone, he, as the head of his father's house, fulfilled the holy office, which, had he continued faithfully and spiritually to perform, then at this day he would have been the first, yea, the very first, of Scotia's sons. For the holy fire still here and there shineth through the witch-light of genius. And it was the severe religion of his father which gave to his poetry that manly tone, and to his sentiment of love that holy tenderness which is the chief charm of his works. But I say he hath done it but faintly. For no man bred in towns can comprehend the nature of a Scottish peasant's prayer, and the martyr-wildness of their psalmody. Except it be in the service-book of our sister Church, which is the gathered piety, not of one age or country, but of all ages and countries in Christendom,—except in that volume, there is nothing I have seen in print or heard in pulpits that cometh near to what I have heard in the smoky cottages of my native country. The

prophetic wildness of their imagery, the scriptural richness of their diction, the large utterance of their soul, the length, the strength, and the fervour of their prayers, is a thing to be talked of by the natives of the towns, in which religion seemeth to me oft a kind of marketable commodity. And it is a thing to make pastors and bishops look to their gifts, as truly it did amaze two of the most spiritually-gifted and learned of bishops, the pious Leighton and the learned Burnet. Let no man talk, therefore, of these speculations as utopian, but go and see, go and learn, go and do likewise.

And if the man who chargeth utopianism upon these institutions be a great one—a peer or noble of the realm—I tell him it is a shame, a crying shame, a sin that smelleth rank in the land, and reacheth even to heaven, the way in which these spacious households are ordered, men-servants and maid-servants, man and child, noblemen and noblewomen, and the hopes of noble houses, without morning or evening prayer, or any spiritual exhortation; all the day long huddled together in horrid moral and spiritual confusion,—week-day and Sabbath-day spent nearly alike,—lying a necessary accomplishment in servants, unseemly hours, meetings at midnight, and housefuls of people commencing the night in hot and crowded places, till the sun ashamed looketh upon such doings of immortal men. In the name of Heaven, what piety, what virtue, what manhood, what common sense, or meaning, can stand such customs? They would corrupt an anchorite, and a saint would rise and run like Joseph from the temptation. I think an angel or an archangel could hardly endure it. Can any pious prayer co-exist, any melody unto the Lord, any jubilee or merry-making of the Spirit, with such disjointed living? Can repentance, can meditation, can reflection, or any mood of mind which consisteth with God, or savoureth of nobleness, live in such a vain show and idle rout? But there have been noble families otherwise ordered, both in this and the other end of the island; and happily there are some still, wherein chaplains were kept for use and not for show,—learned men, and men who feared God, not men who hung on for a scrap of patronage, but men who stood for the Lord, and for the spirit of holiness in the family,—to offer up its prayers,

to counsel the heads of the house, to instruct the children, to teach the servants their duties in a religious sense, to gather the whole household together and exhort them all,—one who was a minister of God amongst them, and shewed his gifts in watching over the souls of a household, thereby manifesting his worthiness to be translated to a parochial or a diocesan cure. The Protestant religion made its way through the noble families of the north. Knox first preached the doctrines of the Reformed religion in a nobleman's hall; and there he first administered the sacrament of the Supper in that simple form which soon laid low the vain and wicked foolery of the mass.

So that the idea which I represented of a godly family is far from being utopian in high or in low life. Nothing is utopian for which God hath given forth His rescript; and in this way He hath ordered houses to be trained up, adding His promise, that when they are old they will not depart from it. But while the world lasts, fashion will whirl it about, and luxury intoxicate it, and passion drive it headlong. Let the world go; let it go its wicked round to its miserable end. But ye are not of the world who have come up to serve Him this day in His courts; or if ye be, come out from them and be saved. Who is upon the Lord's side? Who? Let that man look better to his children than the world doth to its flocks and its herds. Let him look to the holiness of his home more than they do to the profits of their business room. Oh, let him look to the righteous standing of his children with God, more than they do to their right standing with great men and their prospects in life. Then shall the infirmity of his family be cured, and in weakness it shall be strong, and in poverty rich, and in the darkest hidings of the world's countenance it shall be glad. In its afflictions it shall be comforted, in its sicknesses healed, in its bereavements blessed, and in everything made superior to the vexations of life and the troubles of time.

I look upon a family, and think of its dissolution—how it shall disappear before the touch of death like the frost-work of a winter morning, and all its strong attachments dissolve like the breaking-up of the ice-bound waters at the approach of spring,—how snowy age, and tottering feebleness, and stark

death, shall at length come upon the stately supporters of the domestic state, and they shall fall into the grave, bearing with them the thousand loves and affections which can find no second stem to which to transplant themselves. And then comes strong grief for an honest and wise father, and the sad apparel and pale countenance of widowhood and fatherless children, who know not where to look for bread or for patronage. And a mother hath the right over her children shared by some relative or friend, who supplieth the evening and morning consultations of parents over their offspring. And oft the children, like incumbrances, are got rid of to the earliest employment, without any study of their natural disposition or turn of mind, and sent into a cold fatherless world to make the best of it. And perhaps also, ere this, a mother is reft away in her tenderness from the midst of her babes and immature children, who go about the cold house, and cry for her that bore them; but she is not to be found, neither answereth to their cries. And now cometh orphanage, fatherless and motherless orphanage. A stranger comes to nurse the babe, and the babe is happy in its unconsciousness of its loss; but the little ones know not the voice of the stranger. Then asylums are sought for some, and charitable foundations for others, where, far from the chamber of home, their hearts winnowed of their natural loves, they grow as upon a rock, hardy but stunted, strong but crooked and twisted in their growth, for want of the natural soil and genial atmosphere of a father's and a mother's love. And if it is ordered otherwise, that the children should be plucked away in their youth or in their prime, and the two parents left, naked and solitary, without a scion from their roots, or any fruit upon their boughs; then they go all their days mourning; the joy of their life is cut off in the mid-time of their days, their best hopes and dearest affections are buried in the dust. But in whatever way the king of terrors maketh his approach, and in whatever order he taketh away his victims, certain it is that he will not cease until he hath taken them all. He will leave none to tell unto future ages the domestic tale of sufferings and death. One by one they shall be plucked away; after intervals of days, or months, or years, he shall come again, and a mother's tears and

a father's repressed and silent sorrow, yet too big for his manly breast to contain, and fond children, and the tender years of his victim,—nothing shall withhold his arm, or ward off the blow. Time after time he shall come, and fill the hearts of all with sorrow, and clothe their countenances with sadness, and deluge their couch with tears, and fill the house with lamentations, until, one by one, he hath gotten them in his hold, and all the affection that smiled and prattled, all the happiness that glowed around the fire, and all the festivity of birth-day and bridal-day that gladdened the halls of that house, are now converted into the dampness and darkness and unsightliness of the family vault, where father and mother, and children, and children's children, with all their beauty and strength, lie a heap of unsavoury earth. And perhaps the mansion where they were reared is roofless and tenantless, and the garden where they took their pleasure overrun with weeds; and if some descendant come from foreign parts to visit the place of which his father spoke so much, haply he hardly findeth its ruins, or discovereth the spot which once glowed beneath the fires of the patriarchal hearth. "Our fathers, where are they? The prophets, do they live for ever?" Is not our life like a vapour, and the days of our years like a tale that is told?

Now, I know not how a family without the comforts of religion, and the hopes of reunion in heaven, can see its way through this succession of terrible afflictions which must come, wave upon wave, until they be all washed away from the shores of time; how they can join affections in this uncertainty of their abiding; how they can knit them in this certainty of their being reft asunder; how they can thus sleep and take their rest; how they can thus rejoice together and make happy, while the terrors of death are around them, and the dark skirts of eternity are shifting from place to place in their neighbourhood, ever hovering more and more near, and, now and then, enfolding one and another in its dark bosom. And what comfort, what shadow of consolation, remaineth to a death-invaded family, to which there is no hope beyond death and the grave? The Catholics have a provision for this in the deceitful doctrine of purgatory; but we Protestants have none. Ours is a remorseless religion to the irreligious; no bowels of

compassion can move it from its awful truth, no tears of a tender wife or grief-distracted mother can win one compromising word. As sure as it is written, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them," so surely it is written, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Why should these things be hidden, and men left in their lethargy and sleep till the awakening of the last trump?

As sure as father and mother, and stately sons and beautiful daughters, do now live in the bower of family blessings, so sure shall father and mother, and stately sons and beautiful daughters, be taken, one after another, into the grave of all blessing, and the house of all cursing, unless they seek the Lord while He is to be found, and call upon Him while He is near. And as strong as your affection now is to one another, so strong shall your grief, your inconsolable grief be, when one and another and another are taken away, until at length one is left, like Rachel, weeping for the rest, whose bosom hath received all the wounds, and hath been doomed to live and behold all the arrows of the Lord accomplish their unerring aim. And what comfort is there, I ask you, but such as cometh from eternity and immortality? Do you say, Time heals every wound? Ay, time heals the wounds of time by slaying eternity. He vampeth up a kind of endurance of threescore and ten years by the death of ages and ages. That is the cure of time. Do you say, The shifting scenery of the world wears the impression out? Then again the visible pleaseth us by obscuring the invisible,—the ups and downs of life and its goings to and fro whirl the brain out of its musings and contemplations,—and that is comfort. So a mother comforts her baby with a toy, and wiles it out of the memory of what it hath lost by a gaudy thing given it to look at or to handle. And what kind of affection is that which gaieties and diversions can obliterate? and what affection is that which looks for its remedy in the oblivion of a few years? It is of the very essence of affection that it should

last and last for ever. The soul knows no death in its feelings except the death brought on by vice, and the world, and unspiritual desires. And that affection which in its sense and touch looks for the remedy of change or of oblivion contains its own power and its own death within itself; and though it open itself fair and full as the opening rose, there is a serpent under it to sting him that layeth hold thereon; and there is a canker-worm in the heart to consume itself. Affection thinks not of dissolution; if it be true affection, it thinks only of everlasting, of lasting for ever. And such are the affections of nature; they knit themselves for everlasting, and they grow up for everlasting, and they are arguments of an everlasting life, and death cometh upon them in their prime, and beareth them away like lovers on their bridal-day. Oh, then, what is a family full of affection, which have no hopes of eternity! It is like a nest of callow young seized upon by the kite ere yet they have known to float over the azure heaven in that free liberty for which nature was feathering their little frames.

But when the family is impressed with the spirit of holiness, then affection opens itself without any fear of untimely dissolution, and grows up for eternity, and hath therein the gratification of its proper nature. For as it is the nature of the understanding to conceive all things under the conditions of time and place, it seems to be the nature of the affections to forget these conditions, and to act under the opposite conditions of eternity and omnipresence. They seem to defy time, and to unite as it were for ever; they are regardless of place, consume the intervening distance, dwell with their object, and rejoice over it. The contemplation of change by place or time is the death of affection—it lives for all places and for all duration, and cannot abide the thought of dissolution; nor is it ever dissolved, as hath been said, save by the withering hand of vice and worldliness. Therefore without hope of everlasting, affection is miserable; and if I had time, I could shew that it enjoys itself only by a kind of illusion that it is to be everlasting, from which, alas! it is awakened by the bereavements of death. But with hope of immortality, affection is in its element, and flourisheth beautifully. And the family state

being a web of interlacing affection, religion is its very life; and in proportion as it is present, the affections wax warmer and warmer, purer and purer, more and more spiritual, less and less dependent upon adversity or affliction or death. And when so rooted and grounded in Divine love, and glorious hope of immortality, a family is fenced against evil, and made triumphant over death. Life is but its cradle, and the actions of life are its childhood, and eternity is its maturity.

II.

SERVING GOD IN THE HOUSEHOLD.

JOSH. xxiv. 15.

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

WE followed the family from its growth onwards, till, by the slow consumption of death, it had all passed into the invisible world from whence the goodness of God brought it forth; and if it ended there, our discourse concerning its regulation should likewise end. But it is not a congregation of mortals met together for worldly ends; it is a congregation of immortals associated by the immortal bonds of affection for heavenly ends, and immortal enjoyment. God doth not bring forth man to be, as it were, king of the brutes, and after doing some earthly offices, and tasting some sensual enjoyments of a higher kind than they, to go down like them to the dust, and be no more for ever. Nor did He make woman to minister in her place to the enjoyment of this regal creature. Nor doth He give them a houseful of children as He giveth cubs to the lion, or young to the raven, that they may grow up under the guidance of instinct to continue their race, and fulfil their higher allotment of earthly offices. Nor doth He make the heart of father and mother and child instinct with feelings and affections, gathering more and more of strength, and growing more and more in purity and loveliness, only at last to be a banquet—a banquet dressed during the whole of life to glut the maw of unsightly death.

Such mean views of man and woman and their children our blessed Saviour hath for ever cleared away from the earth; and though men of corrupt hearts will always, by philosophy

falsely so called, be endeavouring to obscure the life and immortality which He hath brought to light, there is such an inward evidence of the soul to the high revelations of Scripture—she perceiveth her dignity, her thought, her being, so implicated therewith, that in proportion as she emerges from the slavery of sense and the darkness of ignorance, she seizeth upon them with greediness, and will not let them slip. In Scripture, the soul of man is set forth as created in the image of God, which, destroyed by sin, Christ hath come to renew in righteousness and true holiness, and to which He hath assigned the high vocation of thinking, and feeling, and acting in unison with the will of the Highest. And to give supreme dignity to the head of a family, God hath chosen to Himself the name of Father, and therein given to the parental relation the highest and holiest place. And woman He hath exalted to the level of man, making her bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, in every respect, of body and of mind, meet companion for man. And in order to double the happiness of both, and lay the foundation of the dearest amity and the closest union, He hath formed the body and soul of the one to need and desire the help of the other. So that, being joined as He purposed, they might be one. Each nature maketh request for the nature of the other, whereby it may be completed. And marriage is the completion of these designs of the Creator. And being the wedding, not of the body only, but of the heart and soul, marriage is followed not only by natural issue of the body, but also by issue of the soul. And the children find already prepared for them a couch of affection in their parents' hearts. The heart, if I may so speak, becomes conceptive, and with its teeming affections is ready to embrace the offspring which God may send. And as God, to dignify the station of father, hath taken to Himself the fatherly relation to His creatures; so, to dignify the station of mother, His only-begotten Son was made of a woman, and called her mother. And to sanctify the relation of the children to each other, He who sitteth on the right hand of God on high hath called Himself the elder Brother of the family. And God hath said that children are His heritage, and that the fruit of the womb is His reward.

And He hath promised that the wife of him that feareth Him shall be as a fruitful vine by the side of the house, and the children as olive plants around his table. And His Son, our Saviour, to teach us the excellency of childhood, taught that in order to enter the kingdom of heaven we must become as little children, and that the angels of little children do continually behold the face of God; and He hath admitted the little immortals to the privilege of His Church so soon as they are born; and in everything God hath honoured the family estate, and given an immortal intention to all its relations. It is God who placeth the solitary in families; it is God who joineth the marriage knot by a thousand sympathies, wherewith He hath made the heart of man and woman full; it is God who sendeth children, and prepareth for them a place in the hearts of parents; it is God who chartereth to parents their high prerogative, and cementeth families in their close and lovely union. And, oh, think you that He weaveth that fine web of interlacing affections which a family is, only that all its life long sorrow may prey upon its weakness, and death at length riot in its dissolution? No, no; He weaveth that fine web of interlacing affections which a family is, that He may make their hearts blessed and fruitful with mutual love; He weaveth it weak and liable to calamity, that it may be taught to find its strength in the sufficiency of His grace; He maketh it subject to the dissolution of death, that its dross and corruption may be purged away,—that its pure and pious affections may be put beyond the power of a scornful world, and beyond the fluctuations of time, which vexeth and afflicteth all things.

Therefore a higher strain of discourse is called for to a Christian and godly people, in order to satisfy their higher views of family dignity and of family blessing, which have been opened up in the revelation of God. The discourse which we formerly held was true in all its parts, and had, I know, the answer of tender emotions within your breast; but we seek the answer of a higher faculty than natural affection, even the answer of the spirit of men. It remains, therefore, in the further prosecution of this subject, that we address ourselves to the faculties of the new man, and endeavour to shew how

families should be regulated according to the new views which are given of them in the Holy Scriptures, and how they may be reared up, not for the transient use of a perishing world, but for an inheritance which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and which fadeth not away,—how the heads of families may make to their children friends, not of the mammon of unrighteousness, but of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and embrace their household, not with the instability of earthly affections, but with the faith and hope and everlasting charities of the kingdom of heaven.

To fulfil which high office we shall do our utmost endeavour, and ask, as now we do, the blessing of Almighty God. But, my beloved brethren, the subject concerneth you, and therefore join your prayers that we may be enabled to discourse of it with such truth and tenderness, with such demonstration of the Spirit and power, as shall be blessed to the persuasion of many parents who hear me, to the blessing of their children, their children yet unborn, and of their children's children to the third and fourth generation,—the blessing upon good parents being at the least co-extensive with the curse pronounced upon those that are wicked and disobedient.

Now, in meditating upon this subject, two ways of handling it present themselves to our minds. The one by detailing their religious duties to parents and children, and to husbands and wives, and to masters and servants, and so presenting to each member of the household a chart to guide him in his behaviour. Thereto to add descriptions of the happiness, and contentment, and perfect security of a family so ordered in all things after the will of God; to paint the hallowed offices of religion night and morn around the household hearth, when, in full choir, small and great, high and low, do equalise themselves, and join in the same strain to the common Father of all; to represent the lisped prayers of childhood taught from a mother's lips, and the first shootings of the soul under the constant careful husbandry of a mother's watchfulness, directed by a father's wisdom, and aided by the occasional pruning of a father's chastening hand; to paint the mornings and the evenings of such a household, coming in and going out with joy, and its days spent in a constant quiet and serenity, afflic-

tion borne with heavenly composure, adversity grappled with and overcome, and death himself deprived of his sting and the grave of its victory, through the faith of Him who is the resurrection and the life, and the operation of that Spirit which raised Him from the dead, and gave Him to sit in heavenly places for ever.

This method it were pleasant to follow, as being the most varied and the most capable of powerful and pleasing illustration; but I am convinced it serveth little purpose, and is well-nigh labour lost; and that all preaching of religion in detail, with reference to the outward word and action, is of little effect; and to succeed we must go to the fountains of conduct in the heart, and cast into them the salt of purification—we must endeavour to amend the mother principles and sentiments upon which the word and the action depend. Sure I am that to state the strength of God's commandment, and to paint the moral beauty which cometh from its obedience, though it might excite a transient remorse for having broken the one, and a transient sigh for the want of the other, were able to make little debate with the inward principles which the devil, the world, and the flesh have debauched from the service of the living God. You must plant new principles in the heart if you would look for new fruits in the life. The true feeling of loyalty is worth a thousand acts of knee-homage and court-attendance; the true feeling of patriotism is worth a thousand patriotic speeches; the feeling of friendship is worth a thousand protestations, and in higher things the anointing of faith is before all obedience. And in like manner to the religious regulations of a family, religious principles in the heart must conspire; and till they are present, sentimental pictures will serve little, and thundered commandments still less, to bring about any change in the outward members and visible demonstration of action, while the mainsprings within are under the same opinions, the same notions, the same feelings, and the same sentiments as before.

The first thing which goes to determine the character of the household, and which requireth to be reduced under the power of religion, before any religious effect will be elsewhere produced, is the sentiment which governs the intercourse of the

two heads and guardians of the little state. Until the relation of husband to wife be religiously understood and religiously discharged, it is vain to think by any rules to counteract the influence of constant example, and as it were to enforce religion to grow amongst their children and their servants. The reformation must begin at the fountain-head of affection and of authority, if it would descend and bless the streams into which that affection and authority flow. Here, then, it becomes me to give my first lesson, however unable, upon the spirit which should breathe through the intercourse of the husband and wife, the father and mother of the family.

Though rule be given to a husband and obedience enforced upon a wife throughout the Holy Scriptures, and in the solemn ordinance of matrimony, it is so rather as a beacon set to guard against the danger, than as a landmark to lead and guide the course; for the governing spirit of their intercourse is in Scripture held out to be not authority but love, and the greater meekness of women is urged as an argument for tenderness on the part of men; whence it hath always happened that woman hath been raised to her proper dignity, and protected in her rights, wherever our faith hath made its way in the world. The purity, the sanctity of the married state is so defended in Scripture, and infidelity to its vows so constantly branded as a damning sin, and divorcement from it made so penal, except for one righteous cause, that in proportion as our Protestant faith makes the eye and mind of the people familiar with these things, in the same proportion are modesty and chastity, with all domestic riches and graces, found to spring up and flourish in the home. And to throw a savour of heaven and an interest of eternity into this holy condition, it is said in one place that the believing wife is sanctified by the unbelieving husband, and the unbelieving husband by the believing wife. And finally, to crown all, and give it the highest possible dignity, it is chosen as a fit emblem for representing the relation of Christ unto His Church,—"The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives

even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself."

Now it ought to be the endeavour of the heads of every family to realise something of this divinely sacred and mysterious feeling towards each other. They should regard themselves as one and complete within themselves, their interests one, their purposes one, if possible their faith one, and certainly their affections one. From the moment they are united they have to bend their will and their tempers so as to embrace the same objects; and if the mind of one soar into higher regions than the other, it is that one's part to do what can be done to obtain the sympathy, if so be the company cannot be obtained, of the help which is meet for him. I say not but each hath a proper sphere,—the one to work out of doors, and serve God's glory and his family's weal in the pursuit of his calling, the other to work within the house and preserve its domestic happiness and comfort; the one to bring the stores of a wisdom and experience gathered without, and add them to those practical stores gathered by the other within, and so taking sweet counsel together to see that all things be well and meetly ordered in that which concerneth them in common. But they ought in their hearts to have as little opposite as possible, no affections which it is necessary to hide, no by-interests or purposes which it is necessary to conceal; and the thoughts of their mind being oft exchanged, should come into harmony and unison, that their intercourse may be freed from all discord and contention, which might mar domestic love, and draw moody humours, like heavy clouds, over that sweetest scene in the moral world, a happy family, and that their affections may be hindered from dividing different ways upon the children, and a twofold interest from being engendered, with favouritism, and envy, and the death of brotherly love. But what I count upon the most from such a sweet understanding in all things, is the genial influence under which the little ones will grow up, the union that will be produced, the culture that will be given to every sweet and pious affection, the strength of parental respect that will be wrought into their little hearts, the idea of love and unity

which will sink deep into their souls, the self-government, the bonds of brotherhood, which will wax stronger and stronger with their years. I count far more upon evil being thus kept in shade than upon its rebuke when it comes into light, upon its being chased away by the sweet parental loves and smiles and embraces than upon its being frowned down when it sheweth face. And when it doth appear, think what weight a mother's affectionate reproof hath when supported by a father's authority, and what power hath a father's sage advice when afterwards rendered into soft language by a mother's sweet and silver-toned voice.

If fathers and mothers, therefore, would have a household pious towards God and dutiful towards them and towards one another, they must look for the foundation of it in themselves, and their reciprocal behaviour as husband and wife. If passion at first drew them together, they must put it under Divine control, otherwise their house shall be little better than the wild beast's den or the wild fowl's nest,—a place for continuing the race, whence to turn out sons and daughters upon the world to tread in the sensual steps of their parents, and encumber the overloaded earth with new forms of carnality. If worldly motives drew them together at first, dowry in the wife or rank in the husband, and whatever else is included in that common saying, a good marriage,—then, if they cured not the fatal error by such mutual compliance as I have shewn above, their marriage, begun in convenience, will continue in convenience, cemented by no affection and able to endure no trials,—its delights, form and equipage and show; and, alas! the poor offspring of it will grow up under the influences, fashionable or customary, of that rank in which they are born, untutored of a father's wisdom, unschooled of a mother's affection, with nursery-maids for their companions, and strangers for their teachers of good and ill, and for their fortune some form of that same worldly character in which their parents delighted. If, again, their marriage, rising above sense and convenience, be made a matter of taste, whether for person or accomplishments or mental endowments, then it may chance to engender bitter feuds, unless speedily it be founded upon a more permanent basis. For, as hath been

often said, taste of any kind is but a variable and fluctuating thing, not sufficient to found happiness on;—the relishing of what is excellent, but no proof of the wholesomeness and worth of that which it relishes. And unions founded upon taste I have generally observed to end in a meagre and ill-conditioned household, a niggard and bastard-like race of progeny, who growing as they listed, without the careful formation of principles, or the sweet culture of affection, were apt to become self-willed, and follow some of those vagaries of the mind which drew their parents together. Thus it is that the governing principle of intercourse between the parents begets a kindred character and a correspondent fate in their children. But when it happens that a marriage is founded upon the principles of the mind and the deep affections of the heart, which is the only form of love entitled to the name, those parts of our nature which in our last discourse we shewed to be independent of place and time, and to act under the conditions of eternity and omnipresence,—this it is that is blessed. For the heart is the pole-star in the firmament of the soul, and will not shift. It may be over-clouded with error, and the varying medium of the understanding may refract it somewhat from its true place. But if it be simply consulted, and not warped by the fancy or the interests,—if it be as strictly obeyed as it ingenuously answereth,—then, I say, the voice of the heart is the voice of truth, and will not vary. It is the representative of the eternal within a man, as the understanding is the representative of the local and temporary. Marriage proceeding with its approval, will stand the test; and families springing from such wedlock will be well cared for; and the household which came together by that attraction, and congregated around this centre, —the union of two hearts,—will be ordered according to affection; and things will grow into that happy condition of which it is the aim of this discourse to point out the cardinal principles.

And next, after this of a well-regulated intercourse between husband and wife, between father and mother, the heads and guardians of the household, I place right and spiritual sentiments towards the children whom it may please God to

bestow upon them. I have already set forth the value of children in so far as the honour of their parents' name and the happiness of their parents' hearts were concerned,—how much of life's enjoyment depended upon the good behaviour and character of children,—and how a single error here counteracted all other happiness and enjoyment, and often extinguished the very light of life within their souls. But unto how much more exalted a height doth this argument pass, when we consider the domestic state in a spiritual sense, and regard each individual who composeth it as more varied in his relations and more estimable in his worth than the whole fabric of the world, and see in each little one that cometh from the womb of non-existence, not so much beauty, so much intelligence, so much affection, as it containeth in itself and is capable of producing in us, but so much spirit, so much Divine nature, so much glory, and so much immortality, as through time and through eternity it is capable of developing towards God. In this sense, each babe is a gift from heaven, a gratuity from God, of an infinite value, and, little as parents think of it, is a greater treasure than an estate or a kingdom, and the care of it is more honourable than the royal sceptre, which, with the honours and power, conveys also the care and trouble and endless fatigues of governing. But this little spirit, whereof the administration and management is delegated to us, comes forth already linked by the invisible cords of nature to the hearts of its parents, a part of themselves; and we feel it as being of ourselves a part, grieving not so much in our own ailments as we sympathise in its trials, so that our rule over it is sweet as the rule which we have over ourselves. And a mother would rather starve herself than her child, and she would expose her own naked bosom to save her child. And in the inclement storm, a mother, when she could no longer maintain the struggle with the blast, hath been known to take the warm cloak from her own shivering frame, and having wrapped it around her infant, lay herself down in the drifting snow to perish, content with the hope that her child might thus haply be saved. Whosoever, then, hath been presented by God with a child, hath not only gotten something that shall outlive the world, and which doth in its

Creator's eye outvalue the world, but this spiritual realm over which he hath been made the governor is so sweetly joined to himself, that to care for it is to gratify himself, to watch over it is to double his own well-being. Care here is sweetness, power is love, and trouble is pleasure.

What, then, is a family of such?—it is a little diocese of immortal souls; and what are the parents but the diocesans thereof, not joined by outward ceremony of the Church, but by the inward harmonies of spirit with spirit? And for what end is such a diocese given unto any one?—for their everlasting salvation. And why did God, the great Parent, link their natures together?—that thereby the experience of the one might draw upon the inexperience of the other, the knowledge of the one upon the ignorance of the other. And why did Christ permit children to be presented in their earliest infancy at the holy font of baptism?—that the parents might know their child had an immortal soul, for which He died. And why did the Church, over the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, require obligations of these parents?—in order to constitute them parents in the spiritual sense. Each father is thus a prophet and a priest unto his child, and the law constitutes him a king. So that he mystically represents to his family the threefold relation of Christ to His people—of prophet, priest, and king.

Behold, now, into what deep waters we have come, pursuing the stream of this discourse. We began with a certain shallow notion of obligation, founded upon the wonderful providence which had, out of two young persons, made the little state with all its prosperity to arise. But what have we now?—consignment after consignment from Heaven of immortal souls, testimony after testimony by the sacrament of baptism that Christ hath died for their sakes, covenant after covenant before the Church that we will rear their spirits for immortality. In which there is a threefold obligation of an eternal kind: first, the obligation arising from the intrinsic value of the gift; secondly, the obligation to the Son of God for His death on its account; thirdly, our own voluntary obligation to do for it those functions of a spiritual parent which before God and the Church we entered into at baptism. And

we spoke of an infirmity arising out of fluctuating fortune, of uncertain health, of unregulated temper, out of temptations and artifices of deceivers; but what is that to the infirmity of the immortal soul, preyed against by all the arts of the devil, the world, and the flesh? And what a charge resteth upon those who were instrumental in bringing these immortal creatures into the world, who stood sponsors for their spiritual education at the sacrament of baptism, whose soul is all implicated with their souls, whose happiness dependeth upon their happiness, and whose salvation, if it depend not on their salvation, doth yet depend upon the prayers they have offered for their salvation, upon the instruction they have given them concerning the things of their peace, and upon the pains they have taken in training them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord! And, oh! what an affliction, what a huge affliction,—affliction enough to darken heaven itself, were some essential change not wrought upon our nature,—that our children should be torn from us in judgment, and consigned to the miserable condition of the wicked! I say not that heaven's joy will be afflicted with any sadness, nothing doubting the plenary fulfilment of joy which is to be partaken there; but left as this matter is under the veil, what a motive for parents to apply themselves to the opening souls of their children, and, while they neglect not things convenient for their bodies, to be at pains to feed their souls, to nurse their souls for heaven, to be instant in season and out of season (if ever out of season) at the throne of Divine grace,—to watch as those that have to give a solemn account,—to sprinkle the door-posts of their house with the blood of purification, and to carry a censer of incense through all its chambers,—but above all, to give them the most healthful shelter of parents' piety, and the sweet recreating atmosphere of conjugal unity, —the audience of affectionate speeches between man and wife, which will beget the feeling of union, the desire of it, the ensuing of it, until at length they find it in the union of their souls with Christ, which, as hath been said, is the thing of which matrimonial union is an emblem, and for which the sight of matrimonial union doth discipline the expectation of the mind! And heavy as this task appeareth of rightly express-

ing by word and action that high responsibility which the knowledge of immortality imposeth upon Christian parents, it is not heavy, for it is light, being with the heart performed; it is the very way to ease the heart of paternal and maternal carefulness, and to assure it with paternal and maternal confidence. It transferreth the fortunes of the child from the restless waves of this troublous world to the certain promises of God,—to the fixedness of the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. Oh, brethren, this is the salve to a parent's heart, to commit his child unto the Lord! And it is the best insurance of his child's destiny to write it in the chronicles of the Lord's hearing ear. And, oh! what can be compared with the heaped-up treasures of a parent's prayers when a child cometh of age,—what to this heap of requests collected in heaven, as the cloud collecteth from the rising dews and vapours, and about, like the cloud, to shower down in spiritual blessings upon the opening and tender years of the youth, and ripen him for the garner of God,—what compared with this is the inheritance of wealth, of estates, of titles, of royal dowries, and of princely establishments, yea, of crowns and kingdoms! These pass away with the life of him who is their present frail incumbent. Those come down like dew upon the spirit, diffusing fragrance round, and make it to grow up and flourish in all honest, virtuous, and noble ways, and at length to inherit a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

III.

DUTY TO PARENTS.

EXODUS XX. 12.

Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

THE relation of children to parents is so important in the eye of God, as to have received a place in the decalogue, and the very first place after our duties to Himself. There are four commandments which relate to the honour and worship of God; then cometh a fifth, to secure parents in their high and holy prerogatives; then follow five for the welfare of society—one to protect life, another to protect chastity, a third to protect property, a fourth to protect truth, and the last to cultivate good-will. So that the decalogue consists of three divisions—the first for God, the second for families, and the third for society; in which order I perceive no less wisdom than in the statutes themselves. Before the laws for the sake of society and of our neighbour cometh the law for the sake of the family, in order to shew that the well-being of families is that out of which the well-being of society springeth; that the family is the mother of all associations, the radical court of society, in which the issue is first joined. And before the law for the sake of the family come the laws for the sake of God, in order to shew that the family next standeth in religion and piety. So that of righteousness and moral obedience, this is the Divine economy—first, the fear and reverence, within the heart, of the only living and true God; secondly, the right feeling and discharge of family alliances; thirdly, the performance of social and neighbourly duties; and, fourthly, morality, which they often put the first, is the last in order, for which piety to God and duty to our parents must prepare the way; —which confirmeth all that hath been heretofore advanced

of the importance of home, before God and the community, and encourageth us in the work of shewing forth at length the religious spirit of its various relations. That of children to parents, which hath such prominency in the decalogue, is thus expressed,—"Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee;" and that no one might think it abrogated by the coming of Christ, St Paul hath thus repeated it in his epistle to the Ephesians,—"Honour thy father and thy mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,) that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long upon the earth."

And what serves to characterise this commandment perhaps still more than the place which it occupies, is the form in which it is conveyed. All the rest are negative, running in the authoritative style of a lawgiver,—"Thou shalt not." They are restraints and prohibitions upon the license of human nature, bounds set to the liberty of the human will in various directions. Several of them have threats and comminations annexed to them, and others are couched with a brief severity of language, and end with so unmitigated a tone, that they fall more terrible upon the ear than if they had been rounded off with a particular threatening. But the fifth hath in it no stern prohibition, no negation of liberty, but is couched in terms dignified and tender,—"Honour thy father and thy mother,"—to which the ear listens well-pleased, and the heart assents at once; and instead of a heavy threatening, or an inflexible reason, there is added a gracious and most pregnant promise,—"that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee;" or, as St Paul hath given it, "that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long upon the earth." The welfare of which all are in quest, the long life which all who are well-conditioned desire to have, these two greatest of blessings, which the Psalmist thus expresseth as the universal desire, "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good," are sweetly insinuated in the midst of stern and awful threats, to win acceptance for that which has been already couched in the softest language, "Honour thy father and thy mother," as if the tone which the Almighty found necessary for the preservation of

His own divinity in the midst of idol superstition, softened when His finger wrote of that dear relation of life which is revered in all quarters and regions of the earth,—as if He remembered that He was yet to be known to the world as the Father of an only-begotten and well-beloved Son, and wished to set this relation round with soft entreaty and kindest promise, which having done, He resumed His terrible and forbidding state when He proceeded to give the five fundamentals of social order, which He foresaw were ever to be thundered, and would need the support of terror no less than of love.

If any one would obey this commandment which the Lord hath given to children, he must take cognisance of his inward feelings, and put this question to his heart, whether he holdeth his father and mother in honour; and he must be careful to distinguish it, for there are various sentiments towards parents, approved amongst men, at war with the sentiment of honour approved by God. There is a pride, commonly called an honest pride, in our parents for their worth, which will dictate ostentatious epitaphs, and call forth frequent ebullitions of praise: this is not the honour required of God, but self-complacency and boasting, which is hateful in His sight. There is a pride of ancestry, and an idolatry of the name which we bear, because of the deeds which our fathers have done, which also, as it is commonly exhibited, is a very mixed and equivocal sentiment. There is also towards parents whose condition of life we have surpassed, a feeling of shame, which prompts some to exalt them by liberal gifts into the neighbourhood of their own exaltation, and which prompts others to forget and disavow them as much as possible. In either case, it is a contemptible, and in the latter, a vile and wicked conceit. There is also towards parents an oblivion, arising from the manifold occupations of life, and from the new relation in which we ourselves are placed, which is not to be justified by any demand that society hath upon us, but only by the cause of Christ, which is the demand of God, whose glory is the only thing that standeth before parental honour.

In order to guard against these spurious forms of this sentiment, as well as to rebuke the want of it altogether, it seemeth good, after the general explanation given above, that we

should enter a little into particulars, and point out some of the ways in which it expresseth itself, and by which its presence within us will be revealed.

And to begin from the lowest point of the scale. It will surely include all that we are bound to feel and to do for the sake of our neighbour. For though everything distinctive of a parent were wanting,—every sentiment of love, and every action of duty; though so far as memory could reach back, we could remember nothing but frowns and blows and cruelty; though we had been begotten in sin, and brought forth in shame, and cast naked and forlorn upon the charity of the world,—yet the worst case can do no more than exile such guilty parents into the condition of a neighbour, under which the whole family of mankind is included, when it is said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Surely our parents, at the least, deserve that mother feeling which God commanded us to have towards all men of whatever name,—the feeling of love, and that no weak form of love, but strong as the love which we bear unto ourselves. Though of the wickedest character, we are to bear towards men pity and tenderness, and to utter interceding prayer, which will shew itself in acts best fitted to recover and bless them: however persevering in their enmity and their persecution of us, we are to do them good, and to be gracious towards them. They may scoff against the Lord and His Anointed, and it may be necessary for us to assume the high tones of anger and commination; we may deliver them to Satan for the destruction of the body, but still it must be in love, that their souls may be saved in the day of the Lord. The sentiment of love may put on various expressions, and these expressions may coincide with the expressions of malice, but they must not proceed from malice, which is of the devil. All our feelings towards all men (the very worst) must be in love; all our transactions with them expressions of that love, though in various forms, even as all the visitations of the providence of God, from the most soft and prosperous, to the most stern and inflictive, are dispensations of His love. Now, if in duty to our neighbour, of whatever cast and character, we must be moved in all our actions by the mother principle of self-love,

surely, to our parents, whatever they may have been to us, and whatever they may be in the eye of the world, it behoveth us to feel no less, but something more. The blood that is in our veins is theirs, the natural dispositions within our hearts are theirs, our name is theirs, and the sanctification of grace, or nobility of the world, cannot save us from the honour or dishonour of their fame. And if they were guilty in bringing us into being, it was their weakness; and if they were ashamed of our birth, it was their misfortune; and oh! if they cast us off from their bosom, it was some stern and frowning adversity which they feared, a sad and sore penance done to the fear of the world, or some strong temptation of the evil one that over-mastered them. And if they still live in a dishonour which God's grace hath taught us to abominate, then that same grace teacheth us to pity them, to forgive them, to bless them, to honour them, and to seek to save them. Go to them, if any one here holdeth his father and mother in disrepute, and hath excommunicated them from his heart;—go to and be reconciled to them; treat them at least like a neighbour, with love equal to that which thou bearest to thyself; treat them with honour such as thou bearest to one who, in the appointment of God, is placed over thee.

This leads us to remark, secondly, that whatever we owe to the magistrate we owe to our parents. Now the mother feeling, in which God hath commanded us to live towards the magistrate placed over us, is in this wise. Because regular government is that without which nothing prospers upon the earth, and which, being shaken, all things just and sacred are rushed upon and trodden down; therefore He who watcheth over men hath seen it good to consecrate for its sake a nursing or mother sentiment within the breast of His people, and commanded us to maintain to judges and magistrates and governors a constant reverence within our breast. Instead of which, if we allow the opposite sentiment to prevail in the inner chamber of our soul, and to have the mastery during its silent and brooding seasons,—if we live in jealousy, suspicion, and complaint,—it will come to pass that the obedience which we must yield will be a forced and unwilling obedience; our tempers will be soured, and the way prepared for turbu-

lence and disquiet. Which respectful feeling is not to the man for his own sake, but to the man by reflection from the office. Those who give the reverence due unto him as an office-bearer for the commonweal to him as a man, are flatterers, parasites, courtiers, the sappers and miners of the foundations of states; but those who give it to the office, and thence derive it to the man who fills it, are the assurance of regular government, while they are the terror of usurping and self-aggrandising governors. For the moment the office-bearer betrays his office, their fears for that which they love awaken and take arms. He hath cut the tie which held him to their reverence; he hath wounded that which maintained him in their hearts. The loyalty upon which he sat exalted he hath madly removed, and sunk from his high estate. He is a private man; and worse, he standeth at that bar where he formerly sat supreme. And he hath placed himself at the bar of that law which formerly protected all his personal faults with its sacred shield. So that the reverence for the magistrate, which the law of God prescribeth as the mother feeling of governments, is not only the stability of the ship while the pilot steereth well, but, when he hath ignorantly or wilfully steered amiss, it righteth the vessel, chasteneth him, and haply sheweth him his place. Now, that this feeling is due to parents cannot be doubted, inasmuch as parents are magistrates over us to a great extent, and acknowledged as such by the state. So that, even under the law, they hold an office, and are overshadowed by the sacredness of law, which casteth a canopy over all its servants; but still more by God, who setteth this honour towards parents before the duties to society in the order of the decalogue, thereby intimating that the sovereignty of parents is before the sovereignty of kings and rulers. For certainly the patriarchal was the first of all governments, and no form of government can supersede the patriarchal, so as to render it nugatory. And if government resteth its claim to reverence, and hath from heaven received its title to the same on account of the service it is of to the weal of every man, much more upon that same foundation doth parental authority rest. For they have nourished and brought us up, divided with us their bread,

their home, their property, their heart, their all,—found us in the means of knowledge and spiritual improvement, opened to us an honourable way into the world, given us the best counsels, and besought for us the friendship of all their friends, and regarded everything in common,—which doubtless are tenfold greater advantages conferred upon us than the best government has conferred upon its obedient and respectful subjects. Therefore, even by parity of reason — if to reason these things are to be brought, or rather *a fortiori* by much more than parity of reason—are they entitled to the reverence which we yield to superiors in office or in station. If men have a natural superior on earth, it is the father and mother who reared them, gave food to their appetites, taught their limbs motion, filled their mouths with language, discerned to the best of their judgment between the good and ill of their thoughts, and, when they could not do so, found them teachers and instructors. Can any honour express the sense of that inferiority of strength, of understanding, and of condition in which we so long stood by them, and during which they acted so condescendingly towards us? Can any service repay those obligations which we owe them? If we should live many years their only stay and prop and dependence, we must die their debtors. And that debt we shall never discharge. It must stand over for the sake of our children, and be paid over to them; and so the debt must go down from father to son to the latest generation, and bind families together from the earliest to the last of their line.

This brings us to remark, in the third place, that, in addition to the love which we owe to a neighbour, and the reverence which we owe to a superior, this honour in which we should live and move and breathe towards our parents includeth, if need should be, all that a servant oweth to his master. Not that any father would willingly put a son into the condition of a servant, but rather, like God, adopt servants into the condition of sons; according to St Paul, "Henceforward we are no more servants, but sons, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ;"—but that, if by the adversities of life and through the infirmities of age our parents should be brought into straits, as oft they are, it is the duty, it is the

honour, and it ought to be the glory of children to turn out as labourers, yea, as bondsmen and servants, for their fathers' sake. And it is a stigma, a most gross stain upon the scutcheon of any family that a father and a mother should pine in want, or hang dependent upon charity, while their children have enough and to spare. And when this becometh prevalent in any country, it is time that they should take the state of sentiment of the realm into their thoughtful deliberations, and take measures against the evil, by a more pure and plentiful diffusion of religion; for there is a disease at work in the joints and ligaments of society which will dissolve its union, and make of it an unwieldy mass.

Oh, who would refuse to lay down his hands, and work and toil, yea till blood started from his willing fingers, for the sake of an aged father and mother! For laboured not that father soon and late for us, laboured not that mother night and day for us? Whither is the strength of the one gone?—in bowing himself for his children. And whither is the beauty of the other flown?—in much anguish for her children. Where are the fruits of their labour and anguish?—they went in bread for their children. And to what served that bread purchased with a parent's strength?—it went to nourish health and strength in their children. Strength was reared by strength. Health was bought with health. Are children their own? No, they are bought with a price, with the price of their father's and their mother's youthful labours. Let them redeem themselves by labour in return, if God should so make it needful in His providence. In whom centred all the early feelings of our parents' hearts?—in their children. For whom ascended their prayers unto God?—for their children. Why do they grieve over their broken fortunes?—because of their children. And for whom had they destined all?—for their children. For them every pound that accumulated was doubly dear; for them its loss is twice lamented. And can the children allow them—the stays and props of their childhood—to fall for want of a stay and prop? Can they allow these servants, these slaves of their youth to die, worn with cares, and gray with years, and yield them no service? Can they allow these ministers of all their peace and blessedness to be in their old age single

and uncomforted? Then, verily, upon them and theirs will the heaviest curse of Heaven descend, the curse of a broken-hearted father and a despairing mother. They shall have the inheritance of their own mockeries, and their own children shall inflict manifold upon their hearts the wounds which they deserve, by having inflicted them upon the undeserving, upon those who deserved smiles and caresses. A father's blessing in the religious homes of the patriarchs was a thing which children besought with tears, which they propitiated with the most grateful kindness; because to have it they knew was propitious of all good—to have it not, ominous of all evil. And poor Esau, when he had been sorely defrauded, said, "Hast thou not one for me likewise, father?" But a father's curse let no one abide it; it is more terrible than exile or excommunication, and next to the curse of God the heaviest thing which falleth upon the head of any mortal.

And, finally, into this mother affection of honour towards our parents, there enter many other tender feelings which I have not time to treat particularly: as the gratitude that we feel to benefactors is their due; all the tenderness which we owe to most devoted friends is their due, for what friend sticketh by his children like a father? All that we owe to the most devoted servant is their due, for what servant ever waited upon her children like a mother? And if we have had religious parents, all the reverence we owe to the priest should alight upon them, for they have sent up more prayers than any priest, and taught us more lessons of goodness, and given us more wholesome counsels, and administered to us more faithful rebukes. The heart of man is very capacious, and hath a chamber for every possible relation of life. For the relations of life are all offsprings of certain affections of the mind, which predispose it to unite itself in such relation to the beings with whom it is surrounded. Now whatever is just and honourable, and true and praiseworthy, and affectionate and devoted, in the breast of man, doth commonly pour itself upon the heads of children, from the frank and generous breasts of parents. For an unnatural parent is far less frequent than an unnatural child, though an unwise parent be more frequent. Therefore, in addition to all the obliga-

tions which have this day been discoursed of, it is the part of every child to recollect whatever more extraordinary attention he hath received, and to repay these with more extraordinary returns. And if any one render these extraordinary returns where there have been no such extraordinary gifts, such unpaid affection is well-pleasing to God; and if any one render these extraordinary returns where there hath been neglect and mistreatment, it is the more acceptable to God, who maketh "His rain to descend upon the evil and the good, and His sun to rise upon the just and upon the unjust."

I would not, as I said, bring cold reasoning—still less would I bring calculating exchange—into the mother feelings of the breast of man. They are there for the sake of the soul's own well-being. It is the soul's noble constitution to be capable of them. To evolve them is the prerogative, the very definition of spirit; and therein it stands distinguished from matter. And had the soul abode in her primitive glory, she would have gone on for ever peacefully evolving these feelings to their various proper objects, whereby she would have enjoyed her own well-being, and constituted the blessedness of the spiritual world; and the movements of human society would have been as still, as regular, and as harmonious, as the motions of the heavens; and the heart of each would have beat as pure, as beautiful, and as constant to the feelings of every other heart, as each several star of the heavens doth shine pure, and beautiful, and constant, in the eye of all the others which behold its beauty, and are beheld beautiful in their turn. But from the fall of man his inward principles have grown into disorder, he is usurped by the feelings which belong to reprobate spirits, and there remain nothing but the fleeting shadows of those better feelings which heretofore possessed him wholly. He is possessed with the evil, and by this he is overcome; whence occur the dissensions of families, the destruction of states, impiety to God, contentions, and every evil work.

From which warring, contentious state the Almighty, being minded to deliver mankind, and restore as much of former righteousness as might be in this fallen world, and to prepare our souls for another, did take upon Him the office of setting

man in order again. Artifice had got in among the secret springs of his creation, and the outward end and purpose of his being was destroyed, and he waited for his Creator's hand to set him right again. The Creator did the work like a Creator. He took conscience, which is His vicegerent over the state, and led him by the hand through all its chambers, and shewed what mark and rule was proper to each, and left him to take charge of the same as he would answer at the great day, giving him free access to conference with His blessed Spirit in all difficulties and emergencies. He shewed that the mother feeling towards His providence was contentment,—towards the gospel of Christ, faith,—towards His Spirit, communion,—towards evil done, repentance,—towards good desired, hope,—towards an enemy, forgiveness, —towards a superior, respect,—towards an inferior, kindness, —towards all men, good order,—towards our parents, honour. In these He requireth the soul to abide towards these several objects,—to admit no other feelings; to think under the influence of them, that her thoughts may be holy; to speak under the influence of them, that her speech may be as meat and drink to the spirits of men; to act under the influence of them, that she may become a blessing to all with whom she holdeth intercourse. But above all, in her meditative moments, when resolutions are taken and purposes formed,—in her reflections on what is past and her meditations on what is to come,—in her broodings during which her tempers are formed,—in the musings and meditations and moods of the mind, we ought to preserve these conditions of soul towards all, in order that she may become full of right dispositions and inclinations, and bring forth of her free will the words and actions which are proper to each. Over these mother feelings conscience is the guardian, —no eye perceiveth them but hers. As to words and actions, others perceive them; and for the sake of vanity and interest, and other motives, they may be assumed, and are therefore no certain marks to judge by; but the former, being beheld only by ourselves and God, are real substantial indications of our righteousness and regeneration and being wrought in us, they will not only fill all the occa-

sions which are offered to them, but they will go far beyond, and seek occasions,—not only passively fill the routine of the world's customs, but invent new customs, and find out new fields on which to expend themselves.

Now, of these abiding, constant feelings, which are the mother of action, that proper to live and die in towards our parents is the feeling of honour: "Honour thy father and mother." He doth not say that we should always agree with our parents, for like frail mortals they may be sometimes wrong; but if, for the sake of truth, it be necessary to disagree, we should do so with the respectful and reverential tone of one who beareth them honour. He doth not say that we should always follow their counsels, or limit ourselves by their wisdom, but that however we pass beyond their limited views, it should not touch upon the honour in which we hold them. And if we disobey, as for conscience' sake we behove to do, we shall in our disobedience be mindful that our reverence for them is not shaken; if we have to forsake them, as for Christ's sake we behove to do, still in our voluntary exile to yield them all respect; and if they abandon us, and disinherit us, still to reverence wherever we can the words and person of those who gave us birth; never to allow our souls in hatred or spite; never to express ourselves in bitterness or scorn; but in all conditions, and under all treatment, good or evil, to bear ourselves with submission and reverence, and make it manifest that we honour them, though we find it necessary to honour God and Christ and truth and righteousness still more.

One of these mother feelings of the mind we have endeavoured to unfold, and we had many considerations by which to enforce it, but time forbids us to enter into them at present. Only, then, one word before we close: that if children be left in their liberty from their youth without any constraint of religion, not only will their feelings towards parents, but every other feeling, grow wild and disordered. They will yield to parental authority while parental authority is stronger than their own wilfulness; but when the time comes that the latter acquires the mastery, they will burst away from the restraint, and run a course of their own,—how often a course to ruin! But if parents do from the earliest

dawnings of the mind put their children under the government of the laws of God, they will be taught reverence and obedience in the inward parts of their mind, and their outward actions will conform thereto. Yet there will be no slavery, no drudge of rule-keeping, no degradation of unwilling service. It is a discipline of the principles of action, not a slavery of form. There can be no hypocrisy, there can be no reaction of self-willedness. For the will hath been instructed, the will hath been subjected to God. And there will occur no time at which parental authority will be a sham or a burden, until the fear of God become also a sham or a burden. Let parents meditate this matter well; for, while it is the only way of breeding noble-minded and pious children, it is the only way of securing the reverence of children. While it seats you in the heart, it secures you all the obedience you can wish. While it keeps your children under subjection, it keeps them from slavery. While it saves them from self-willedness, it saves them from hypocrisy. And, under God, it gives the only fair prospect of continuing one calm and peaceful union in families while they are spared here, and of obtaining for them a united fellowship for ever in heaven above.

If we owe such duties as I have this day discoursed of to our earthly parents, who are compassed about with weakness, how much more to our Father in heaven! They are, under Him, the authors of our bodily, He of our spiritual part; they bring us up to a short and chequered life, He hath prepared for us a life of everlasting blessedness. "They for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness." If we honour them for their affection, let us adore Him for His everlasting love. If we obey them for their high prerogatives of parents, much more let us submit ourselves in all things to our Father which is in heaven. And as Christ, though a Son, yet learned obedience in affliction's sorest school; so let us, though adopted sons for Christ's sake, bear the cross of contumely and contempt, of labour and sorrow, if need be, for the sake of our Father which is in heaven. Then upon us shall descend the blessing from above, life without end. And we

shall dwell under the shadow of the wings of His protection; and there remain for us mansions in heaven, which our blessed Saviour hath gone before to prepare for all those who, like Him, love and obey the heavenly Father, and hold the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end.

IV.

MATRIMONY.

THE two great cardinal sentiments which the Christian religion seemeth to cultivate are communion and subjection, existing at one and the same time within the same soul,—communion in its various forms, first of charity to all men; then of love to the brotherhood, commonly called the communion of saints; then of union to Christ, commonly called the mystical union of Christ with believers; then of the fellowship of the Spirit; and lastly of that in which they all terminate, the union of the soul with God, the participation of the Divine nature, the new creation after the image of God in righteousness and in true holiness. Along with this principle of communion in its various forms, it is the object of our religion to cultivate the principle of subjection or obedience in its various forms,—submission to the dispositions of Providence, and subjection to the kingly authority of Christ, patience under the persecutions of men, obedience to our parents and to all in lawful authority, subordination of all the faculties of the inward man to the law of conscience, and yielding of the conscience to the laws of God. These two great sentiments of communion and subjection, or, in other words, love and humility, our religion setteth itself mainly to cherish, in order that we may be delivered from the two opposite sentiments of enmity and pride, which are the bane of happiness in this world, and the misery of the wicked in the world to come. Enmity and pride, with all their tribe of dependants, which are malice, envy, revenge, selfishness, hatred, cruelty, and the like, come of too strong a concentration of the powers of human nature upon itself, too frequent a meditation of our own concerns, too little care for those of others;

too much trust and dependence upon our own address and resources, too little upon the providence of God; too much tribute of success paid into the treasure of our own merit, too little into that of the praise of God; too much of our failure and misfortune ascribed unto the wickedness of others, too little to our own undeserving, and the righteous displeasure or well-intended visitation of God;—in short, too great a determination of all thoughts and events selfward, too little outward. From which causes of malice and pride to redeem the children of men, our Lord and Saviour hath, in every sentence of the Gospel, sought to draw us out of the strong and enchanted hold of our own personality, to commune with all spirits, from the Spirit of the living God to the spirit of the meanest, yea, and most wicked creature; and throughout all that range of intercommunion hath given us some form of the sentiment of love whereunto to lash our soul, yea, also some form of the sentiment of humility under which patiently to possess it. So that it may be said, these two sentiments of communion and subjection are the poles upon which the spiritual world revolves,—the two eyes of Christian life, which conduct it to harmony and peace; the two wings of the Christian spirit, by which it is raised from the selfishness and worldliness of the present life to the refinement and blessedness of the life to come.

Now He in whom were hid all the treasures of wisdom as well as of goodness, hath sought not only by positive commandment to establish the reign of humility and love, but by the wisest measures to win favour for them, and to insinuate their sweet influences into the souls of men; and as the rudiments of character are laid in the earliest childhood, and grow good or ill according to the discipline of those years we live under the observation of our parents, the Lawgiver and Saviour of men hath taken the family under His special management, and hath given it such a constitution in the Holy Scriptures as to make it favourable to the extinction of selfishness and pride, the rulers of the world, and propitious to humility and love, the rulers of the world to come. That nursery of men which home is, He hath regulated so as to make it a nursery of Christians, by constituting it a type or

symbol of these two sentiments of communion and subjection for which He seeketh access into the breasts of men; so that it shall present unto the children the constant exhibition of these two cardinal sentiments, to which their eye being turned during all the years of opening nature, they may gain favour in their sight, coming in company with all the sweet charities which live about a home, and all the dear affections which cluster around the parents to whom we owe life and all its blessings. As Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the emblems or visible notation of the two great doctrines of the faith—cleansing from natural depravity by the blood of Christ, and our sustenance in the new life by the grace which cometh from above,—so, in the family, the relations between husband and wife, and between parents and children, are the two great emblems by which are held before the eyes of the children the two great sentiments of the Christian spirit—communion and subjection. And in this sense it is that the Christian constitution of families is of such admirable importance, in order that the children may grow up amidst the beautiful incarnation of these two sentiments, and grow into the apprehension and admiration of the sentiments themselves.

While I explain this, I request your grave attention, as to a matter of the last importance, and worthy to be oft solemnly entreated of from this holy place, though, alas! it be far more frequently made the subject of idle jest and thoughtless folly. The estate of matrimony, at its first establishment in the garden of Eden, was made the closest union upon the earth, for the sake of which all others should give way: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh;"—the constancy of which union was defended in the Decalogue from all invasion, as the next thing in importance to life itself, before property, and honesty, and good-will. It was further confirmed and defended by our Lord at the renewal and re-enforcement of the law from the Mount; and the whole mystery hath been opened up by Paul, in various parts of his epistles, as emblematical of no less than the union of Christ to His church, of the souls of believers to their living

Head. In this relation between husband and wife, it is the design of God to exhibit the most perfect union whereof two spirits living upon the earth are susceptible. He intendeth that there should be community between them in all things, individuality in none; that whenever they differ they should find a common ground on which to agree, and not separate and recede into their proper provinces of thought and feeling; but do their most diligent endeavour to be of one heart and of one soul. He meaneth it to be the perfection of communion, the masterpiece of affection, and the parent of all other associations—friendship, acquaintance, and society. And this, not for the sake of domestic happiness and prosperity alone, but for the sake of religion and spiritual blessedness. For in joining such a communion, it is manifest that both parties must surrender their personality, and come forth from the magic circle of their self-love; that their natures must become interwoven, each resigning self for something better, which is not self, but communion, which is not a thing seen, but a thing unseen—something made from the union of the two, which hath no existence in either. Now, in this resignation of self, which Christian matrimony is intended by our Lord to be, the great step is taken towards religion. Communion is deliberately preferred to selfishness; and if communion with a spirit of like infirmity with our own, how much more communion with the Father, and with His Son Christ Jesus! When this community, not of goods, nor of person, but of purpose and design, and everything which is communicable, hath taken place, and is in sweet operation, then it not only assisteth the parents to the higher and more perfect communion which religion is, but is to the children a constant emblem, as hath been said, of communion in general, and from the earliest dawn of feeling, it maketh a strenuous debate with the principle of selfishness, to which human nature is so prone. They behold, from the first moment that their spirit can behold spiritual things, a common interest as well as a self-interest. All that blessed family estate, of which they are a part, they perceive to come from the sacrifice of the personal, and the triumph of the common. Its regulation proceedeth altogether by consent, and whenever

dissent comes, then come discord and every evil. The face of peace is marred, the harmony of the household is confounded with jarring interests, and the guardian genius of home departeth. But when communion returns, then with it the blessedness of the whole family is restored. In this way it cometh to pass that the married estate becomes a standing type or emblem of communion, a constant argument against selfishness, a constant incitement of the generous and pious parts of human nature in all the household; and being so established, it is worth a thousand lessons to the heart; it is an atmosphere in which the heart lives, and breathes, and hath its being; and the blessing to the family of such a cordial union is not to be estimated. It is not to be estimated, because no one's consciousness can ascend so high into the rudiments of his being. There the dawn of thought and feeling God hath mysteriously hidden from us in the darkness of childhood; like as, at the same period, He hid from us the prospective view of life. There our spirits grew, feeding upon smiles and embraces; our morning of life dawned in the holy light of a father's and a mother's shining face. Joy was our frequent companion, and carelessness went ever with us, hand in hand. If, instead of such an auspicious ushering into this world of care, we had been fed with the sour grapes of maternal fretfulness and paternal tyranny; if our ear, for the dulcet and soothing sounds of a mother's fond love and a father's sprightly joy, had been accustomed to sharp quarrel and contentious discord; if the comfort we had in our homes had been banished out of doors by feuds and contentions, and peevishness had usurped the place of sweetness, and stern command of loving-kindness, and contention of communion, and we had grown up under these storms and troubles of the domestic estate, rather than under its pacific influences;—then, just as in troubles of the political estate every mind is a little shaken off its centre—some unhinged, and many altogether deranged, and a spirit of wild speculation and factious dissension seizeth all the children of the state,—so in the family, it cometh to pass, is such anarchy, that all the springs of thought and character are troubled at their fountain, and a brood of discontented, disunited, ill-thriven children grow up

fulfilling the terrible, yet true commination of the Lord, that He visiteth the iniquities of the parents upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him and keep not His commandments. But, upon the other hand, when true community and harmony of feeling are preserved by the parents and guardians of the family, the children grow up under the sweet influences of love and blessedness, and become unconsciously attached to home,—with how much strength they know not, until they are torn away from it, or some of its endeared objects are removed. They grow up as the subjects of a well-ordered state, in the midst of their privileges and possessions, working, each one in his place, with diligence and contentment, holding no disputes or noisy brawls, and venting no wild patriotic effusions, but living upon those things concerning which your would-be patriots talk. Such people, though quiet and simple, are strong, and strongly united, and, being invaded or assailed, woe to those who stir them or wound their peace. They rise from their quietness, and they dash them in pieces, like the potsherds. Thus nourished in peace and unity, the tender shepherds of the tender flock have oft crushed and trodden upon the mailed and battled strength of armies that had swept whole portions of the earth. In such peace, in such love, and in such strong attachment to home, do children grow up who are nourished under the sweet consenting sway of united and harmonious parents.

Thus have we explained how the family, which is ordered after the institutes of Christ, becometh a constant emblem of the spiritual world, in which the soul of man should live with its Maker; and it ought to be an argument stronger than all others for so ordering it, that our children are thereby in the right way of being trained up for life and immortality. To which agree the words of the wise man when he saith, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." As to those spouses who consult not for such communion, but give way to the stream of this world's fashions, which corrupteth all things, and live not for God, or for one another, or for their children, but for the display of their rank, or the obtaining of distinction, or some

worse consideration,—as to those parents who exercise no such godlike government over their children, but give way, the man (for I call him not father) to money-making, time-serving, or ambition; the woman (for I call her not mother) to her dress, and companies, and most ostentatious entertainments, leaving their offspring (for family it is not) the while to every random influence of the nursery, or the academy, or the public school;—let such spouses, let such men and women, come not into the assemblies of the righteous, or if they come, let them know that God's messengers have for them nothing save "Anathema Maranatha," until they repent of their sinful ways, and reform the economy of their houses, and make their homes no show-rooms, nor eating-houses, but temples of God,—their nurseries no house of exile for orphans, but the abode of fatherly and motherly charities,—until they make their babes and little children acquainted with the right of commonty they have in a father and a mother's heart, and the duty of respectful obedience which they owe to a father and a mother's charges. I know the engagements of life,—I know its vanities and its ambitions also, how they defraud home, and make it oft nothing more than an inn or a caravansary of the night. I am not here to combat such excuses; but here I am to teach the spouses who are willing how they may reach that communion nearest to heavenly whereof I spake, and to teach parents how they may reach that authority likest unto God, in the shelter of which their children will grow up great and good.

It is not difficult to unite these two sentiments of love and submissiveness, for in truth there can be no love without submissiveness, and true love sheweth itself by sacrifice. The next purpose which a family is intended to serve in the economy of Divine grace is as an emblem of subjection, the second great sentiment of religion, and a school for the same, which it doth as well to the parents as to the children. For both of these two sentiments of communion and subjection, which religion requireth to co-exist in the same breast, are contained, embodied together and working in concert, in the family. The sentiment of love or communion when existing alone worketh towards God familiarity, and produceth fanaticism, and

must be guarded by humility or submission, which addeth the awful and the venerable to the affectionate and the lovely; and towards men the sentiment of brotherhood needeth the same restraint, otherwise we lose the respect due to superiors, and expect it not from inferiors, and things tend to equality and commonness which suit not with the present condition of the world. And herein is the family so excellent a school of religion, that it containeth these two sentiments in the most heavenly combination. For while the parents are maintaining with each other what community they can, they are, in the act of doing so, submitting and deferring, I do not say to each other, but to the common good and united condition after which they seek. They are submitting the personal to the common, the selfish of their nature to the generous, the seen and felt good to that which is not seen and is not of themselves, which is the nearest approach that can be made to the submitting of our rule to the will of God, and entering from a state of alienation into a state of communion with the Spirit of holiness. So that the state of matrimony being religiously maintained, is the best school by far which the earth holdeth for the perfection of spiritual life.

But it is to the children that I would particularly refer this use of the family as an emblem of, and a school in which to learn, that kind of subjection which the Lord regardeth. For, as communion without subjection turneth into fanaticism, so subjection without communion turneth into slavishness and superstition. God cannot abide panic-struck devotion. He cannot away with timorous rites. The love of Him casteth out fear. The heart, the whole heart must go with the service. He loveth a cheerful giver to the poor, and loveth the same hearty, cheerful offering unto Himself. For He is not a tyrant though He be a sovereign. Righteousness and peace are the habitations of His throne; mercy and grace go continually before Him. Yet He will be observed and obeyed, but with the heart and soul. He doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. For why? Because He doeth righteously and bounteously. He is glorious in His holiness, and fearful in His praises, doing wonders; and none may stay His hand from working,

or say unto Him, What doest Thou? Yet there is to be found with Him mercy that He may be loved, and plenteous redemption that He may be sought after. Now, this union of love and humility, of communion and submission, being the state of soul in which God wisheth His people to be found continually, it is of an unspeakable value that they should grow up during those years in which the mother instincts of men are developing themselves under a similar conjunction,—that they should be born under, that they should be reared under, this happy and religious aspect of the governing sentiments of the soul. A family regulated after the pattern shewed by Christ is such. For the parents have in their hands a power almost divine of governing and ruling over their children. And, as we shewed in a former discourse, they have conveyed to them a trinity of offices—prophet, priest, and king. And no man is permitted to be a bishop in the Church if he rule not his own house well, and have not his children in subjection. And the Son of God was in subjection to His earthly parents for thirty years of His life. And next after He had provided for His own worship and glory, whereof He is jealous, and which He yieldeth not to any other, God provided in the decalogue for the high and holy prerogatives of parents, securing the family weal in preference to the common weal. And in high and solemn language He hath laid down the fatherly office, saying, "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Yet in a thousand places He requireth of them love, saying, "Parents love your children, and provoke them not to anger;" and it was one object of the coming of Christ, and of the Elias of Christ, to turn the hearts of the parents to the children, and of the children to the parents. And Jesus, though He dwelt in the bosom of His Father's love from everlasting, having taken upon Him our nature, as a son learned obedience; and though it cost Him groans and drops of bloody sweat, He said, "Yet, holy Father, not my will, but Thine be done." And what is the whole incarnation of the Son of God but a great act of filial obedience, undertaken to bring the rest of the children back into the arms of their Father's love, and the joy and fatness of their Father's house?

So that the condition in which a child standeth to his parents is the best emblem of the condition in which the soul should stand to God ; the mingled love and authority which a father holdeth over his household is the best example of the feeling of God towards the children of men. And the communion and subjection which mingle together in the soul of a child towards his parent is the best lesson of the state of mind which we should preserve towards God. And if that parent learn of God how to fulfil his high and careful office, his children will grow up in the fittest frame for religious and spiritual men ; and as the parental bond relaxes, will feel the want of some congenial bond in which their soul may have equal delight, and will pass by an easy transition into a filial subjection to the Father of spirits.

Oh that families were so ordered ! Oh that religion were so brought over our souls by early influence of those persons, things, and places in which our souls have pleasure ! Then we should not run the gauntlet of wild dissipations when we have slipped out of a father's sight, and die in our prime full of wickedness and disgrace, or live full of shame and bitter regret for the follies of our youth. We should not, if we became religious, become blind bigots, or puny zealots, or fanatics, or superstitious fools. There would be no revulsions and revolutions of nature in order to become a servant of God. It should come upon us by unseen degrees, and, as is reported of Jesus, as we grow in grace we should grow in favour with God and man. And our religion would be soft and reverential as family love ; and the household of saints would become as the great family into which we had been translated, of which Christ was eldest brother ; and the rest of the world we would visit with kind remonstrance, and much sacrifice, as He did, in order to bring them into the fellowship of our peace and security, and then we should come to be bound in the arms of communion and subjection to the great Father of all ; and, living in His embrace, we should live in peace, and rejoice in hope of His glory, when He should send His Son the second time without spot unto salvation, that He might gather us together into the mansions of His Father's house, which are prepared on high for those that love Him.

V.

DUTIES OF PARENTS TO CHILDREN.

PROV. XXII. 6.

Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

OUR children are a gift more immediately derived from the hands of God than any other thing which we call our own. The goods of fortune change hands and descend from father to son, and we are but the temporary tenants of their enjoyment. They are tools and instruments for training the immortal spirit, which office having discharged for us, they pass downwards to discharge for others, and are but the furniture and accommodations of our present lot. But a child is a sister spirit, a joint heir of immortality, who being once impregnated with the breath of life by its Creator, can no more return into non-existence, but shall survive the conflagration of the heavens and the earth. The soul of each babe is not to be exchanged, according to our Saviour, for the whole world. The redemption is precious, it is not to be purchased with gold, neither can silver be weighed for the price thereof. How highly honoured is man to be the parent of such an offspring. The earth produceth plants and flowers which bloom and sow their seed, and perish and return to dust; the animals do the work appointed them by man, beget other servants for his use, and likewise perish; but men, whom the plants of the field do feed, and to whom the animals do willing obedience, or are fain to yield themselves a prey, are born to endure for ever, and to give birth to beings who shall likewise endure for evermore. Human nature is the handmaiden of God, and bringeth forth productions upon which the Almighty doth set His love and impress His heavenly image.

Which highest worth of children is not only taught by revelation, but even by the instinct of nature. The first sight of them begetteth in the bosom of parents an emotion of love and a devoted attachment, which in every one that vice hath not brutified, is strong as death, so that nothing beneath the sun, not all beneath the sun, shall bribe a virtuous parent to part with his infant child. And though it is long before affection shews itself in return, the passion grows and strengthens, until our children become the chief objects for which we labour and are ambitious—the joy of our life, or the grief and sorrow of our hearts. "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate."

Each child, moreover, may become the parent of a long line of posterity, and single children have become the parents of many nations. And it rejoiceth the heart of a child to have a pious and virtuous parent, and introduceth him both to the favour of God and man. And if a father hath been at pains to instil excellent lessons, and cultivate righteous habits in his children, and to pray much with them and for them, then God hath pledged Himself that in their old age they shall not depart from it, but shall hand down the legacy of piety and worth to another generation. Whereas, upon the other hand, if parents be neglectful of the Lord God, and fail to make mention of His wonderful acts unto their house, allowing themselves in folly and wickedness, then God, who is a jealous God, will visit their iniquities upon their children's children to the third and fourth generation; which Divine commination, though it seem hard, is nevertheless fulfilled in the experience of the whole world. Not but that even the offspring of the wicked are invited, and often enabled, to seek after the God whom their father despised, but that they find it difficult to cast off the deformity of early youth, and conform to religious government.

Meanwhile the state suffers or rejoices in the possession of a reprobate or religious people. For righteousness exalteth a

nation, but sin is the disgrace of any people. Pious men are the salt of the earth, which keep society from hastening to decay and dissolution. Good and wise rulers find all their trouble from the wicked and the lawless, but the righteous are their joy and rejoicing. Whereas wicked rulers have more to dread from a holy generation than from the armies of the enemy.

On every account, therefore,—of God's appointment, of nature's inclination, of our children's benefit here and hereafter, and of the common weal,—it vitally concerneth every parent to take the most vigilant oversight of his youthful offspring, and in their behalf to postpone every other care, however urgent the world may deem it. "Labour not," saith our Lord, "for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth for evermore." "Fear not men, that can kill the body, but God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell-fire for ever." In the same spirit we say to parents, Of all things committed to your trust, cherish in the first place the immortal spirits of your children. Compared with this, the nourishment or decoration of their bodies, soon to be defaced by the wrinkles of age, and consumed by the mouldering grave, is as nothing. Compared with this, the prosperity of a few years, the ample fortune, the elevated station, the short-lived renown, are as nothing. Ah! it doth sicken one to look on and witness the troubled and tempestuous waters upon which parents launch their children, without any outfit or provision of stable and lasting principle. The brave and gallant youth goes forth to encounter a thousand forms of vice, unwarned and undefended, and he falls into their wanton embrace, thereby despoiling the gracefulness of his immortal soul, and shipwrecking his everlasting life. Oh that parents would learn from the experience of their own youth what a gauntlet of temptation their children have to run, and not send them like sheep to the sacrifice, or fuel for the fire that is never to be quenched!

To which end, let me pray as many parents as are here present to bear with me, while I do my endeavour, in the strength of God, to put them in the way of training up their children in the way they should go.

You may take it for granted, that, if left to themselves, your

children will go astray; for there is a law in our members warring against the law of our mind, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin which is in our members. This sentence of the apostle, which brings us acquainted with the corruption inherent in our nature, doth bring us also acquainted with an opposite principle, which contendeth against the corruption, but without success. This better nature in every man—the law of the mind, warred upon and triumphed over by the law of the members—the whole tenor of early discipline should go to nourish into a strength which might keep its enemy under. To prosper and promote such an undertaking, whether in youth, or manhood, or latest age, the gospel is constructed on very purpose. It is an invocation of the better man within the breast, by every gracious and gainful method of address, and a discountenance of his antagonist by every threat and denunciation of terror. The authority of God, the tender mercy of Christ, the auxiliary influences of the Holy Ghost, peace of mind within and promise of prosperity without, acquittal at the last judgment, and an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, are presented under every favourable aspect, with a constant application, to keep in heart every good principle, and make it victorious over the evil. While, on the other hand, present and eternal judgments, dispeace of conscience, remorse, rejection of God and man, the present punishment of every crime, and the future reaping-time of indignation and wrath, of tribulation and anguish,—are mustered in fearful forms to overawe and restrain the evil principle of human nature. And this contention, which, without these evangelical aids, were hopeless, we are taught is not only hopeful, but certain of good issue through the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I consider it, therefore, to be the office of every parent who believes the gospel, to make himself acquainted with these its encouragements of the good, and these its discouragements of the evil, and to use them, according as God giveth him the ability, for the sake of his child. There is no difficulty in this. The truths of religion are not hid in mystery, but level to the plainest capacity, and just as they are mysterious, they are unimportant. The

most homely mother is as able—perhaps more able, taking all things into account—to bring them home to the conception and heart of her child as the ablest minister of the gospel. The ideas are simple, being affection, forgiveness, and help; anger, threatening, and punishment; and being so simple, the Lord will not hold any parent guiltless upon the score of his ignorance, at least in this Christian land.

But it is not by formal lectures, given at seasons of great transgression—though these are not to be withheld—but by constant presentation in our familiar discourse of those sacred motives, that a godly effect is to be wrought upon our children. These religious truths must become household truths, and be interwoven with the very structure of our nursery discourse; and to utter them the countenance must not fix itself into an iron mood, or the voice take a terrible tone, though reverence and solemnity do become them well; but with all affectionateness of manner, and winning accents of speech, with embraces, with caresses, and with blessing, such as Christ never failed in towards children, ought these lessons of the great Parent on high to be communicated by parents upon earth. For what are parents on the earth but honoured agents of the great Father of all to train some of His offspring unto glory? The soul of the little innocent is from Him, and by Him joined in wedlock to the material part, which is born of dust; and the material part, which cometh of dust, shall to dust return; the immaterial part returns unto Him who gave it. Seeing, then, that parents are but commissioned tutors, honoured guardians to the growing spirit, they must take their example from the great Parent over all, who tendereth His counsels in the most gracious language, and bestoweth His gifts in the most winning mood.

In pleasant and attractive forms, therefore, let each parent present to his child, for the edification of its soul in righteousness, those wholesome truths of salvation which God by His own Son hath opened up and made free to the whole earth, skilfully applying each to the present necessity, and addressing it with the utmost affection. During the years of infancy and boyhood, let a mother ply this useful care with more diligence than she does her household occupations;

and let a father, with like application, lend the influence of his superior wisdom and authority; and if it be needful, after the virtues and affections of home have taken root, to send him to a distance, in order that he may be accomplished for his vocation in active life, let them seek out masters that fear the Lord, and follow godly courses in their homes and occupations. To all which let them join parental solicitude, and frequent fervent prayer, and they may safely trust their children to the care of the Lord, who doth not forsake the righteous, nor suffer his seed to beg their bread. Then truly, whereso-ever your children sojourn, they will bring a blessing upon the neighbourhood, and your ears will be charmed with the voice sweetest to a parent's ear, the voice of their children's praise. Foreign lands will bless the womb that bore them and the paps that gave them suck; and God will make them to the distant nations what He made Joseph to the land of Egypt; and for their sakes whole cities shall be preserved.

There has gone forth in the present day a most narrow opinion, as if nothing more were necessary for working these good effects upon the rising generation, than to teach them the use of the twenty-six letters of the alphabet, and the ten Arabic numerals; as if these were to operate like talismans of the East, or magic numbers of whose powers the ancient Pythagorean fabled. And in support of this narrow notion the instance of Scotland is constantly cited. But be it remembered, that Scotland is not only a country famous for letters, but for religion. Her priests are priests indeed—parish priests—the pastors of their flocks; and her peasantry are men full of thought—not human animals; and her Sabbaths are days of religious teaching in every house, and public worship in every family; and parents aim at the duties mentioned above, and so do teachers of schools; and the ministers of religion encourage all. But let her Church hasten in its race of subserviency to political purposes, and let her Sabbaths become profaned, and her parish schools be stripped of their sanctity, then it will be seen in what stead mere letters will stand her.

Nevertheless, it is a crying sin that in a Christian land the people should not be able, every one, to peruse the word of

God, and the treasures of good principles which our language contains. Nothing would serve so effectually to take them from the indulgence of animal instincts, and rouse within their breasts the consciousness of intellectual power and the appetite for intellectual gratification. But along with this there must be circulated amongst them wholesome books, and they must be stirred up by active agency to peruse them. To all which ends, no institution under heaven is so efficient as a laborious, painstaking priesthood. And truly, until some such Promethean spirit be communicated to the people, it is vain to think that they will discharge the office of training up their children in the way in which they should go.

Oh, if I had a thousand tongues, each more eloquent and pious than that of Paul, I would employ them every one to move the people who now listen to me, not only to fulfil for their own offspring the offices mentioned above, but to cast an eye of sympathy upon their various neighbourhoods, and do a part for the poor children who rise under ignorant parents without any knowledge of the ways of God, and fall an easy prey to the snares of the tempter. And here, again, I crave your indulgence while I counsel you upon the best way of carrying this Christian charity into effect. For there is a zeal without knowledge which harms the cause it would endeavour to serve. To step into the bosom of a family, and, as it were, draft so many children out for a charitable establishment, there to be fed and clothed, and educated, is always a most expensive, and often, very often, a prejudicial measure. Of children, nature hath intended parents to be the guardians, and for this purpose she hath joined them in the closest ties. Too frequently it happens that sensual gratifications stand in the way of the sacrifices which nature prompts to in behalf of the children. Then the true friend of the family is he who will administer counsel to the parent, and open up to him the loss which his child is suffering by his unprofitable indulgence. His interest in his children is the best hold you have upon a dissipated parent. Economy, on their account, is the best principle you can bring into the bosom of his house. An ambition that they should be wiser and better than himself is the noblest feeling of a parent's

breast. These, and the obligations of religion mentioned above, if well applied, may almost always be made to succeed, if not in destroying, yet in diminishing the evil. He who works reformation by these means, regenerates both parent and child at no expense but persuasion, and he has his means to meet the really necessitous cases with which society abounds. But to pour supplies out of your purse into a family into which already Providence is pouring a sufficiency, to take upon you the gratuitous education or clothing or feeding of the children, is to take away from the parents all remorse of their unparental ways, to give a loose to their own personal indulgences, and to break up, in a great measure, the natural attachment which God binds between parent and child, and whereon the chief pillar of civil polity doth rest.

VI.

FOR THE ESTATE OF ORPHANAGE.

PSALM xxvii. 10.

When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.

HAVING lately discoursed of the family, and pleased ourselves with meditating upon its rich and varied affections, and with the hand of religion endeavoured to strengthen its infirmity, and to heal its troubles, we shall now attempt the same office for the estate of orphanage, of fatherless and motherless orphanage, bereft of all earthly stay, and left to depend upon the providence of God, and the tender mercies of His people. God, whose way, though dark and mysterious, is in the end just and righteous, and whose dealings with us, though stern, are all in goodness and mercy, doth not tear away the father and the mother from the tender offspring without recompensing them for their loss by giving them a double portion in the promises of His word, and a double honour in the dispensations of His providence, which it shall be our endeavour this day to set forth, that those whom He hath bereaved may know and betake themselves to their refuge under the shadow of His wings; and that the soul of every one may be exalted who putteth his trust in the Lord our God.

The natural evils of orphanage are fourfold:—First, the loss of parental nurture and tuition; secondly, the timidity and reserve, and uncongenial restraint of all the powers of the soul which would have pleasantly unfolded themselves under the warm shelter of a father and a mother's love; thirdly, the want of that introduction to the world which the

name and station and exertions of a father give unto his children; and fourthly, the exposure upon all hands to the arts of the wicked, who are ever ready to profit by inexperience, and to take advantage of the unprotected. Upon these four sides the orphan lies exposed. He hath no parent to cherish him; his soul is thereby withered or stunted in its growth, or forced into unnatural forms. He hath no one to instruct him in the ways of men, and introduce him to the business of life, and, therefore, he is a prey to a thousand forms of imposture. Against these four inclemencies of his condition, we shall shew how careful the Almighty hath been to protect him, to place him not only in safety, but to exalt him far above all his enemies round about.

For the first, it is not the occasional admonitions of a father, or the lessons of early piety dropped by a mother in the ears of childhood, whereof we lament the loss to the orphan; these may, in some measure, be supplied by a good guardian and a pious teacher, which, alas! are not often to be found in any rank—seldom in the lower ranks to be obtained at all; it is not the control of a father's authority, or the admonition of a mother's watchful affection, which also are hardly to be found a second time upon the earth, but it is the ever-present picture of a father working for his family from break of day to evening-fall, from week to week, and from year to year; his enduring of all weathers and encountering all hazards for his wife and little ones, and the ever-present picture of a mother labouring in the house all the day, and often watching all the night over the objects of her unwearied solicitude; and not the union of their hands only, but the union of their hearts, their consultations together by the evening fire over the interests of the little state, their fears, their hopes, their prayers, and all other demonstrations of their incessant care;—this is what we lack and lament in a family which God hath bereaved of its natural heads. Those conditions are all gone from the house which make it the nursery of affections in the children. It is home no longer; no longer sweet home which contained the excitement of every tender feeling, and its reward when excited. A mother's smile no longer unlocks the heart, and a father's knee no longer unbends the tongue

of the little prattler. And there is no commonweal round which their opening sentiments may concentrate; no father whose labours the sons may share so soon as their hand can form for itself labour; no mother whose cares the daughters may divide so soon as their hearts can understand to feel. They look not on conjugal love and parental union, which, being present before the eyes of children, is, as it were, the practical representation of all those tendencies of the mind to unite with others, the actual demonstration of that which brotherhood, and friendship, and religion aim to become. There is nothing to counteract the selfish, to which individual nature tendeth; nothing to represent the social and the common. The little ones bereaved are not drawn forth by the natural heat of parental affections, nor united by the cement of family bonds. They grow up lonely and divided, and are liable to divisions. And when divisions arise, there is none to heal them. There is no mark nor sign no banner round which their affections may unite when they are broken and scattered abroad. And herein is sustained the most grievous loss, which it boots not to enlarge upon, but rather to set forth the cure which God hath provided for the same. In His word, which describes the redemption of this world out of suffering and mercy, it is revealed that orphans, though they be fatherless and motherless, and without a certain home or dwelling-place, are not therefore forsaken upon the face of the earth, but become members of His family who is the father of the fatherless, and the husband of the widow, and the orphan's help, and the refuge of all the destitute who put their trust in Him. And though they be cut off by the afflictions of Providence from the happy establishment of home, and have lost their portion and inheritance of a father's industrious arm and a mother's tender care, they are not removed from the watchfulness of that Eye which never slumbereth nor sleepeth, nor from the help of that ample Hand which dealeth out its portion to everything that liveth. And though they be unheeded and alone, and the step-dame world use them roughly, they are certainly of more value in the sight of the Lord than the lilies of the field, which He arrayeth in more royal robes than the monarchs of the earth; and their immor-

tal souls are dearer in His sight than the raven's brood, which He carefully nourisheth, or the wild sparrow of the field, which cannot fall to the ground without His notice and permission. The orphans may be cast forth and ejected from their father's tenement or farm, when they have no longer the scheming mind and busy hand of a father to pay the rent thereof to the needy or heartless lord. With the wrecks and fragments of their household, they may have to take their heavy way to crowded cities, or to foreign lands, or, without the means to move themselves away, they may become burdensome to the charity of those around them, and lose the noble rank of independent men; but though the worst should befall which cold poverty and helpless orphanage are heirs to, let them not despond or be cast down, for they are not one jot further removed from the kingdom of heaven than before, which cometh not with observation, neither consisteth in meat and drink,—which is independent of, and to be insured without help of, yea in opposition to, father and mother, and brother and sister,—which is before riches, or food, or clothing, yea, more instant than to-morrow's fare. For it is written, "Care not for to-morrow; say not, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? but seek ye first the kingdom of heaven, and all things shall be added thereunto. After all these things do the Gentiles seek; but your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

An orphan, therefore, is one of God's family, and hath a rich inheritance in the promises of God, to obtain possession of which it needeth to be instructed in that faith which is the gift of God, and to wait for that blessing which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow. They are not destitute nor forlorn, but have constantly at their right hand and at their left hand a Parent who provideth for them, and will provide for them as He provided for Joseph, whom brotherly envy had made an orphan and a bondsman in the land of Egypt; as He provided for Ruth, whom God's providence had made a widow, and her own piety had made a stranger in a strange land; as He provided for Esther, who was an orphan in the land of captivity; as He provided for Daniel and the three children, who were cut off from their kindred, and trained up in the

house of bondage to wait upon the humour of an Eastern king. These examples, and the promises of Scripture which they exemplify, and whatever other instances are to be found in history, ancient or modern, sacred or profane, of God's wonderful watchfulness over those bereaved of their parents, forsaken of their friends, and cast forth to perish;—as of Ishmael, the father of nations, delivered by the angel of the Lord; of Cyrus, exposed to perish, suckled by the she-wolf, and sheltered in the shepherd's cot, to be afterwards anointed by the Lord to work mighty changes upon the earth, and set His people free; of Moses, in his bulrush-cradle, left to the waters and the crocodiles of the Nile, to be afterwards advanced into the familiar friend with whom God conversed and talked face to face;—these, the annals of the orphan and the destitute, being gathered together, and instilled into the opening minds of those whom God hath in like manner tried, teach them confidence and trust, and their uprooted affections transplant themselves to another Parent, and for earthly trust there shall be heavenly, and for a worldly ambition there shall be a spiritual, and they shall grow up rooted and grounded in the Rock of their salvation, and, in the strength of their invisible but ever-present Father, shall look their enemies in the face, and not be ashamed of their oppressors in the gate. And the boy, thus tenderly affectioned of God, and shielded of God, shall go forth to serve his master with faithfulness, and shall seek the company of his brethren, who are, like himself, of God's family, and he shall avoid the company of the wicked, and of those who kidnap the souls of the unwary, until his master discerneth in him a trusty and a faithful servant, and moved by the Spirit of the Lord, who hath the hearts of all men in His hand, he promotes him in his service, until at length, from one degree of honour to another, he makes him ruler over all that he hath, as Pharaoh did unto Joseph in the land of Egypt. And the tender maiden, thus affianced to God, the father of orphans, and joined to the Lord Jesus Christ, the elder brother of all who put their trust in Him, shall be decked in the graces of modesty and meekness, and defended with the armour of faith and righteousness, so that if any wicked man, thinking

her an easy prey, do set his snare for her chastity and virtue, he shall find that his tongue hath not art enough to beguile her artlessness, nor his estate wealth enough to bribe the guardians of her innocency; that though he be a man of fortune, or a noble of high degree, he must woo her with his heart, as woman should be wooed, and win her by his worth, as woman should be won, or else brook his defeat as best he may, and meet the shame and scorn of the righteous, and the ire and indignation of God, against one of whose daughters he hath dared to conceive harm and attempt wickedness.

It ought, therefore, to be our great and our last aim and endeavour to direct the thoughts of orphans to the care which God taketh of them, to carry those affections, which have no father or mother to rest upon, up to Him who is the father of the fatherless, and the refuge of the destitute. This lesson should be wrought into them like a second nature, until affection to God come to domineer in their hearts, as the love of father and mother would have done, and God take the very place of father and of mother in their souls, and His word become instead of a father and a mother's counsels, and their prayers to Him be with that frequency and trust and fond assurance with which children open their minds to fathers and to mothers. And under the canopy of their affections they will cast off the timorousness of orphans, and have the hope and trust and assurance of love which is necessary to the right growth of the early mind; and they will have that consolation always present which their pitiful condition needeth; and they will be united by a more constant affection than that of children to parents, and one which is still more prolific of other pure and noble affections; and they are under the discipline of God's gracious commandments, which are better than the best instructions of a parent; and they are wooed by instances of His love, more frequent and more winning than what the most liberal parents have to bestow. And the orphan's Father is a great protector, and delivereth His children with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, under the canopy of whose defence their hearts shall wax valiant for truth and righteousness; and

they shall grow up trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, and bear much fruit, to the praise and glory of Him who hath made them strong for Himself. A certain boldness is given to the little spirit which hath stretched its wings to heaven, and taken shelter under the Parent of all; and a stability is wrought throughout all its affections, derived from the unchangeableness of Him to whom they have been given; and its principles acquire a consistency like the consistency of truth, and its tempers in the midst of trials have a serenity like unto the temper of the Son of God; and their designs, like His, will be of a celestial purity, and of a large benevolence to the children of men.

In the next place, when an orphan comes to take knowledge of his state, and to compare it with that of others, whom God is rearing under more soft and favourable conditions, he is apt to shrink, and misgive, and grow timorous. The helpless boy, or more helpless girl, finding shelter under the roof of some kindly relation, cannot by all kindness be brought to forget the difference between itself and the rest of the children. This difference it discerneth, not so as to express it, or to comprehend it, but still it is shewn in its backwardness, in its timorousness, in its bashfulness to take its rights, or to plead its cause when its rights are invaded. But how seldom does affection try to establish itself in an orphan's fluttering and uncertain heart—how seldom is affection in any form an orphan's lot! They are sent to live at schools, with no parents' home to bind their aching hearts at time of holidays; they are apprenticed out to masters, with no parent to protect them from a master's harshness; or brought up in asylums, where, let the best be done, there is small compensation for the loss of home. It is good when these asylums are under a man devoted to the Lord, because there the orphan is instructed in the Divine helps for these its natural ills. But when otherwise it happens, as for the most part it does, that no such instruction is tendered to it, the little helpless thing, buffeted and beat about, under much authority and little affection, grows dissatisfied and distrustful; and having no natural guardian to

whom to unbosom its grief, it grows reserved and jealous, and loseth that noble sense of equality and resolution to keep its own which is so necessary to the unfolding of a manly character. Often its spirit altogether droops; sometimes it sours; and more frequently it worketh cheerlessly on till something occurs to determine it to good or ill, though it wants that cheerful setting out, that morning sprightliness and buoyancy of hope, which so well becometh a young man entering life in the pride of his youth, and which is so good a promise of a successful issue to the journey.

This constant feeling of their loss, and sense of their loneliness, which presseth down the spirit of orphans, and being helped by the hard and niggard conditions into which they are thrown, hinders the fair development of their character, and makes their success to depend more upon fortuitous events and chance patronage than upon hopes fairly formed, and measures steadily pursued, is not to be removed save by some feeling as constantly present in the mind, to counteract that feeling of their rejected and forlorn condition which produceth the evil. And this consideration the Almighty has abundantly provided in the revelation of the gospel. For whereas things go on in the worldly estate of man by transmission from father to son, by family help, and by inheritance of one kind or other, He hath made it quite the reverse in the religious estate, which He doth promote independent of all these aids, by honouring the state of orphanage. So that it is a very condition of its success that we be able to forsake father and mother, and brother and sister. Religion rests upon the individual, and gives dignity to the individual, and is the only thing whereby the heart of the orphan can be sustained, and the inequalities of his condition made up, and the withering effect prevented which the solitude of soul in which he grows hath upon the bloom of his opening character. Here he is upon a level with the best-conditioned of his fellows, and he breathes the inspiration of perfect equality. Nay, more, he hath here the advantage. There is here a counterpoise, and more than a counterpoise to their earthly advantages. For if you will reflect with me for a moment,

you will see how the dispensation of the gospel exalts the condition of orphanage, and gives it whereof to boast itself over every condition upon the earth.

When the Son of God condescended to take upon Him the limitations of human nature, and to dwell in a tabernacle of clay, He had His choice of all conditions in which man is found, and He chose the lowliest, and wrought His way through tribulation into glory—through servile and mean estate to a name which is above every name that is named in heaven or on earth. He divested Himself of all worldly possessions, patrimony, or honour; and though He had a mother when He entered upon His holy vocation, He solemnly, at the first act thereof, denuded Himself likewise of that consolation. For why? To teach His followers that the way to His kingdom was a lowly path; that the spirit of His kingdom was a meek and enduring spirit; that the communion of His people was with the abject and wretched conditions of the earth; and that there was nothing in human form which they should shrink to encounter, and nothing in the providence of God which they should not with contentment receive. And it was to teach the world where to look for His spirit; not in courts, nor in feasts, nor in splendid halls—not in the revelries nor crowded spectacles of the earth—not in the march of armies, nor in the debates of senates, nor in the congregation of mighty men; but where their Head and great Teacher was found, amongst the despised and rejected of men—those wounded and bruised of sorrow, those stripped and made bare by the providence of God—among the orphans, and the helpless, and the destitute. Oh, that coming of Christ in low estate is a noble equipoise to the estate of poverty and misery which, when poverty and misery shall understand aright, will chase their sorrow, and counteract their envy, and set their restlessness quiet, and make them as satisfied, yea, more satisfied with their reproach than with the pleasures of sin—more contented with the countenance of God shed upon their estate in the life of His Son, than though their corn and their wine and their oil did abound!

Furthermore, Christ, when He sent His apostles and evangelists forth, did make them all orphans; no staff, no scrip,

no change of raiment, no money in their purses, and they were to salute no one by the way. Having thus disencumbered them of all former helps and friendships, he sent them forth into the cities to preach the gospel. They were to go, not like mendicants seeking the means of life, but like ministers of peace dispensing peace amongst the towns and cities of the land. All this was done in order to teach them first, and all the world after, that when a man is stripped to very nakedness, his spirit may be rich to overflowing; when he hath not one grain of that which the world prizeth, he may have whole dispensations of that peace which the world by all its wealth can in no wise procure.

Thus, in the sending forth of these men the estate of orphanage and poverty was honoured. Now, further mark how it was still more honoured in their reception. "And into whatever house ye enter, say, Peace be upon this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it, and if not, it shall return to you again." Now, what is this son of peace but that gracious and heavenly disposition which looketh upon outward want and poverty without contempt, and is not thereby prejudiced against the message which it beareth? "If the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it;" that is, you shall find welcome. Then go on eating and drinking whatever things are set before you. Heal the sick, and say unto them, The kingdom of heaven is come nigh unto you. But if they receive you not, shake off the very dust of your feet against that house and city, and leave them to a fate worse than that of Sodom and Gomorrah. Now, mark this connexion between humanity and religion. When there was an hospitable reception of him who came in the name of the Lord (and every orphan cometh in His name, who is the orphan's Father,) there the peace of the gospel abode, and brought forth its healing fruits. But wherever the hospitable reception of the destitute stranger was not, thither the peace of the gospel found no more resting-place than did the raven which Noah sent forth from the ark ere the waters had subsided from the earth. Now, I would pray men to think of this passage in the gospel history a little; for it is not only honourable to poverty, and blessed to those who treat poverty

well, but it revealeth the great secret of the gospel propagation upon the earth and amongst ourselves. If any man harden his heart, or shut up his bowels of compassion to his fellow-men, or measure them by their rank and station, and look not to the image of God upon every form of humanity, but to the world's stamp thereon,—then, mark you, that man cutteth himself off from receiving the gospel of Christ, which he contemneth in these haughty moods. And he must humble himself to men of low estate, he must work the world's leaven out of him, his heart must soften, and his bowels of compassion yearn towards his kind, and the image of God in every man must be respectful and honourable in his eye, before the peace of the gospel will come nigh unto him, or Christ's message of salvation be acceptable unto his soul. And exactly in proportion as that maketh progress in his soul, he will unlearn contempt, and high-mindedness, and ambitious honours, and conceits of rank and place and office, and learn humility, and meekness, and condescension, and compassion, and graciousness to the afflicted, lowly condition of manhood. As he sideth off from the world, and forgetteth its gradation of men to whom court is to be paid, he will join himself to Christ, and pay his court to such as Christ was; to such as those men into whose hands Christ delivered the commission of dispensing peace to the children of men.

By these two great examples,—first, of His Son, by whom the world was saved, presented to the world in the most abject and unprotected condition; secondly, of His Son's ministers, by whom the world was evangelised, having been reduced into a state of orphanage before they could be fitted for the work,—God hath not only taken away from orphanage its reproach, but He hath stamped it with a certain honour, as the best condition from which to commence any mighty work. And hence I doubt not Samuel was brought up an orphan, and the Baptist reared an orphan, in exemplification of the same truth, that when properly used it is a vantage ground upon which to fight the battles of the Lord, being a disengagement from worldly objects, in order that with undivided heart we may join ourselves to God, and serve Him in every righteous and holy way upon the earth. Let

orphanage therefore despond no longer, but take heart and join itself to God, who hath taught such lessons of the honour of this estate in His holy word, and hath humbled the pride of all goodly conditions, and made them to defer unto poverty, in order to be blessed with peace and with the glad tidings of great joy, which He sent His orphan outcast servants to publish abroad. In the spiritual world they have their refuge, their encouragement, their triumph. In the natural world they have every disadvantage to contend with. Therefore, in order to be nerved for the latter let them draw upon the former. In order to go forth equal-handed into the contest of human life, let them go strengthened by the example of Christ, and of His apostles, and of His evangelists, and of all who, since these times, have promoted the interests of the gospel, and who, to become eminent in this the highest walk of human exertion, had first to bring themselves into that very condition into which they are already brought by the providence of God. While they look at things seen they will despond; when they look at things unseen they will take heart again. Therefore let the orphan, if he would prosper, be conversant with spiritual things, which is the field of his glory, and in the strength of which they will conquer till the end of time.

In the third place, in order to meet the want of friends and patrons, to which the fatherless are at all times exposed, and to bring them forth from their solitude with a high and mighty hand, in order that they may not pine unseen, or make their plaint unheard, that their modesty may not be put to the blush of frequent suing, and their hearts to the pang of frequent refusals, and that they may always have friends wherever their Father hath friends,—He hath done no less than make them over, in sacred consignment, in solemn trust and bounden duty, to all who make any pretensions to religion. Every saint He hath constituted a guardian of the orphan, in the most direct and pointed language. And that man's religion is vain who will not take upon himself the charge of the fatherless. For it is written with much solemnity and precision: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and the widows in

their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world." Whatever it be before the world, whether in visiting church or chapel, whether in making prayers, speeches, or contributing of our means to the spread of the gospel,—whether in being Churchman or Dissenter, Calvinist or Arminian,—most certainly, before God and the Father, before Almighty God and the common Father, it is this—"To visit the widows and the fatherless in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world." In which the care of the widow and the fatherless is made equal, nay, is placed before holiness and purity, as if the way to the latter were through the humility and affectionateness of the former. But whichever be first, they are equally necessary to the perfection of a saint. For as God is not holiness alone, but mercy combined with holiness, love regulated by justice, and justice tempered by love, so neither are God's people, who are renewed in His image, all sanctity, (for all sanctity suiteth only heaven, and upon the earth were sternness and severity;) but they are sanctity combined with charity—charity which loveth the sinner, and sanctity which hateth the sin—charity which seeketh out the sufferer though sunk in wickedness, and sanctity which blesseth him and counselleth him when he is found. And the reason why the tender and affectionate part of the Christian is preferred by James before the pure and blameless is the same for which St Paul preferreth charity to faith and hope, because it draws us to our kind, and unites us to them, and seateth us in their love, after which we may profit them as best we can, but before which, while we stood awfully apart, ensphered in our saintly purity, we were too august, too unapproachable, for the fallen and miserable to draw nigh unto us. The open hand of charity draweth them nigh, the open bosom of kindness cherisheth them, the soft tone of affection stealeth into their mistrustful and timorous souls. All the conscious backwardness which the modest petitioner feeleth is met by all the tender affection and open-hearted charity which the Christian giver bringeth. All the remorse, and shame, and haggard wofulness which the prodigal bringeth is met by the hearty affection and open forgiveness which the Christian father bestoweth. And thus the good leaven being

brought into contact with the unleavened part until the whole is leavened, the salt of the earth is brought into contact with the corruption of the earth, and preserveth it from decay and dissolution. Therefore it is that visiting of the fatherless and the widow in their affliction is not only exalted to the level, but placed before the other necessary part of religion pure and undefiled, which is to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. Of this visitation of the widow and the fatherless we have also many beautiful examples in Scripture. Elijah, when he was sent forth to seek shelter from the vengeance of Ahab, was directed to the house of the widow and the fatherless, to bless them in their affliction. And Elisha, to protect the widow from the creditors of her husband, and to save her fatherless children from being taken for bondsmen, visited her in her need, and multiplied her pot of oil to pay her debt, that she and her children might live in peace and in plenty. Our Saviour, seeing the misery of the widow of Nain for having lost her only son, unsolicited touched the bier and restored him to his mother. And He likewise restored Lazarus to his sisters, who were a family of orphans. And the gospel was first preached to the Gentiles in the person of Cornelius, who gave much alms to the widow and the fatherless. And at Joppa, Peter raised from the dead Dorcas, who was full of good works, and of alms-deeds which she did, and made coats and garments for the poor. And John wrote a letter of encouragement with his own hand to the elect lady and her children. And in every possible way the Lord and the servants of the Lord have shewed by their example, as well as taught by their precepts, that it is one great province of religion to visit the widows and fatherless in their affliction.

Therefore, let the saints who hear me look to their ways, for surely the Father will see His helpless children righted, and in judgment will inquire whether His holy commission was fulfilled to the widow and the fatherless. His family is one family. He is God and the Father. Some of the brethren have enough and to spare, others are hungry and naked, and in need of all things; which difference God hath allowed, that the children may communicate together, the

one giving, the other receiving,—and more blessed is he that giveth than he that receiveth. How to discharge yourselves of this duty, Christian brethren, judge for yourselves. One may seek out the orphan, and take him as a servant into his family, and be to him instead of a parent; another may adopt him altogether into the place of a son; a third may take him and teach him his profession; a fourth may bring him to the asylum, and have him carefully provided for there. But surely in some way or other God intendeth that this function should be discharged by you His servants; and that you should not wait for solicitation, but should go round and visit them, and comfort them in their affliction, and do for them whatever the bowels of your Christian compassion move you to do. Here, again, let the orphan rejoice in the protection of their Father, who hath brought to their help all the chosen ones of the earth, the servants of Christ, and the sons of God. Let them not fear for helpers, for they have as many in the land as God hath obedient servants, as Christ hath faithful disciples. In their evil day, God hath not left them without comforters; in the hard passages of their life He hath not left them without friends. He hath not left them like lambs forsaken of their dams, to pine in the bleak waste, and bleat in the deaf ear of the howling winds, but He hath provided shepherds to seek for them, and to bring them in safely, and teach them the salvation and household which is provided for them on high. He hath divided their service between the habitations of the bereaved and the habitations of His holiness; and no more may they forsake holiness, without which no man shall see God, than they may forsake the house of mourning and the solitary dwelling-place of the orphan.

In the last place, to protect orphans from that advantage which the mercenary and the wicked take of their unprotected condition, to guard them in their nonage from needy and greedy relatives, to save their tender lives from the bloody hand of the next heir, to guard them against pilfering guardians and dishonest executors; or if they be of the poorer sort, to guard them from tyrannical masters and neglectful teachers, from artful knaves and from seducing

villains, to draw around the simple boy and the artless maiden a defence of terror, yea, to overawe the hardened spirits whom the rights of the orphan petition in vain, and who see in their unprotected state the incitement and the avenue to their hellish plots; to overawe these men, whereof the world is full, and to enforce from their stout hearts and rebellious wills what from the pious He softly petitioneth by the example and doctrine of His Son,—what hath He done less than write the orphan's rights in letters of blood and flame, and taught mankind that from the awful throne of judgment, before which heaven and earth shall tremble, He will make fiery inquisition after every one who hath not helped and assisted the least of these his little ones? He hath bound it upon men, by their welfare throughout all eternity, to look unto the condition of the needy, and to help them in their distresses. For when the judgment shall be set, and the books opened out of which the souls of men are to be judged, these are the counts upon which men are to be tried, and by which they shall be found worthy of the kingdom of heaven, or doomed to the kingdom prepared for the devil and his angels. I was an hungered, did ye give me meat? I was thirsty, did ye give me drink? I was naked, did ye clothe me? I was a stranger, did ye take me in? If ye did so, not to me, but to the least of these my children, enter into the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world. Now, verily, if any scholastic disputer about words quibble and say, But who are God's children? choose me out the elect from the non-elect, that I may know which to visit, and clothe, and nourish; then I answer, The orphans are God's children, for He hath said, I am the father of the fatherless and the stay of the orphan. Do so to them, and thou shalt be safe of doing so to God's children. Nay, do so to any child, thou art safe of doing it to one of Christ's little ones. For never did Christ see children but He blessed them; and when His half-schooled disciples would have repulsed them away, He said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And so much did He honour the estate of childhood that He said, "Except ye become as little children, ye

can in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven;" and to be born again—that is, to unlearn earthly wisdom, duplicity, and all the world's schooling, and enter into a second childhood of simplicity, and sincerity, and single-heartedness—He hath placed at the very entrance-threshold of a spiritual life. So that they do but wrest the Scriptures who seek to deprive the orphan of that heritage which it hath in the revelation of judgment to come, as well as in the revelation of a present providence. If the penalty be so terrible for refusing help to the orphan, how much more terrible to those who take advantage of their condition to oppress them, to injure them, to seduce them from virtue, and to use them for other vile ends! The orphan is holy. If his helplessness doth not make him holy, God's commandment will. And if that doth not, the right hand of His vengeance will. Therefore stand in awe, and sin not against the orphan, otherwise condign punishment through eternity is your doom. And if any have injured an orphan, let him repay it manifold. And if any hath evil-entreated an orphan, let him seek forgiveness of Heaven, and make what reparation he can. And if any hath ruined an orphan, let him afflict his soul with the godly sorrow of repentance, and do works meet for repentance. Let him repay in kind the wrong which he hath done, helping many for the cause of her whom he hath ruined; blessing the houses where they are entertained, assisting the charities which keep many from ruin, and labouring to the very utmost to testify the hatred he feels for his sin, and the desire he hath for forgiveness and amendment.

Thus have I spoken in behalf of the estate of orphanage, and endeavoured to build up the house of its peace, and shew the protection and the defence which God hath provided for its want. And let the orphans who hear me take heart from that which hath this day been declared unto them from the word of their Father. God hath adopted them into His own family, and fulfilled for them the offices of those who are deceased, guiding the reins of His providence with a special consideration of their destitute and afflicted case, tempering the rough and inclement storms of life to their nakedness,

extending over their heads a canopy more secure than the roof of a father's house, and fostering the excellent part of their nature more skilfully than the most wise and tender mother. And when He sent forth His first-begotten into the world, He sent Him in a condition as destitute as that of any orphan, in order that the rest of the family might not be dismayed by anything which can befall them, when they behold Him in whom His delights were from everlasting, His only-begotten and well-beloved Son, in a worse condition than they. And when He made a selection of chosen spirits to publish the acceptable year of the Lord to the children of men, He first stripped them of everything and made them orphans. And so instant was He, that when they asked to be permitted but to bury their father, He said, "Let the dead bury their dead; arise and follow me. For a man must forsake father and mother, and brother and sister, in order to be my disciple." So that what is an orphan but one ready, delivered, and set free for the service of the Lord—one who has not to tear himself, but one who, by God's providence, is torn from the dearest and nearest enticements of life, and stands girt about for the good work of glorifying God? So that truly the orphan, if he rightly knew these things, should not only be content, but take courage; should not only take courage, but rejoice and give thanks that the Lord hath gathered in their affections all unto Himself,—that He hath separated and set them apart, made their character, not as to the body but as to the soul, without any worldly indulgence of the affections, in order that they might devote themselves, if not from the womb, from the day of their bereavement, unto the Lord.

But whereas, if left, like lambs forsaken of their dams, tender and helpless, to shiver in the cold wilderness, and bleat in vain in the ear of the howling winds, they would certainly perish, and never know the shelter which heaven hath provided for them on high, the Lord hath been careful to give one half of religious duty to them, and been content with a half to Himself. And whatever interest He hath in the bosoms of the pious He hath shared with the orphan, giving

one part to the dwellings of the fatherless, the other to the dwellings of holiness, and guaranteeing no part to the dwellings of mammon, or vanity, or lofty-minded pride. And to command obedience when His love might fail, to enforce upon the stout of heart and the rebellious what from the pious He softly petitioneth by the example and doctrine of His Son, He hath written the orphan's rights in letters of blood and flame. And from the awful throne of judgment, before which heaven and earth shall quake, He hath taught that He shall make fiery inquisition after those who have refused to help the destitute, or to visit the widows and the orphans in the houses of their affliction. The former part is to the orphan; this latter part is to us, responsible and accountable men. And let us all, men and brethren, look to our ways, and consider the case of the fatherless. For whosoever hath no heart for relieving the miserable condition of humanity; seeth them, and passeth by upon the other side; knoweth them, but reasoneth down his knowledge by alleging that he hath not time, or hath not disposable means,—that man is far from the kingdom of heaven, and living in the kingdom of selfishness, or of vanity, or of pride, or of some other of the princedoms of this world. For it is not possible for a man to enter into that state of spiritual existence, that condition of the soul, which is called the kingdom of heaven, without having a heart to help the helpless, a desire to succour the distressed, and a fatherly feeling towards the orphan. And he must be poor indeed who hath not some crumbs from his table to feed these withal, or some mite to cast into the treasury which is devoted to their use. Now, mark this which I now say, for it is the secret of religious life. So long as we serve the god of this world, he sweateth us with toil in order to gain that which he sweateth us with lust to consume; or he pricketh us by ambition to reach that estate which he pricketh us with ambition vainly to display, or gorgeously to set forth in the eye of gazing people; or he worketh us by avarice to amass and store up that which corrodes our own souls, which we leave behind us, and which hangs like a millstone around the necks of our children, weighing them to the earth. But when

Satan is cast out, those avaricious, ambitious, and sensual appetites lose their function over us; and instead, gracious and charitable, humane and benevolent dispositions take the lordship—the divine lordship over us. And the vast means which formerly men devoted to expensive and extravagant and ostentatious objects are now set free by the temperate and moderate and simple life which we follow after; and we find ourselves rich, though formerly we were poor, after our moderate wants are supplied,—though not richer in our income, rich in disposable substance. And to what should we dispose them, but to those new masters, the gracious and charitable, the merciful and humane masters who now have the sway over our spirits? And where do they look for these objects but amongst the orphans and friendless, the dejected and forlorn? Thither they go to dispense their means, as naturally as the sensual man doth to seek the materials of a banquet in those places where appetite is ministered to, or the vain woman goeth to the Vanity Fair where she may find bravery for her person, or furniture for her showy apartments. And it is as much the nature of the Christian spirit to travel about and about in quest of his objects, if he find them not near him, (but how can that be? for the poor and the fatherless we have always and everywhere,)—if he find not his objects at home, to find them abroad, over the whole earth, even as the sensualist ransacks all climes of the earth for his banquet, and the vain woman all provinces of nature and art for the equipage of her person, which being thus trimmed she displayeth to the rude eye of every gazer. Thus it happens that these actions—feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, and taking the stranger in—become the marks of a Christian spirit, as the wine-cup and the feast, and the unchaste eye and indecent speech, are the marks of a sensual spirit; as jewels and finery and equipage are the marks of a vain spirit; and posts of honour, and offices of state, and titles of nobility, and military orders, and dictatorships, are the marks of an ambitious spirit. And no one entereth into the kingdom of heaven but through these humble and lowly gates; and no one hath the spirit of Christ

till he hath the desire to fulfil these humble and kind offices to his fellow-creatures. And the more ripe he is for heaven, the more is he intent upon these offices; and the more he hath of faith, the more he tendeth to these works of mercy. For what is the effect of faith? it purifieth the heart, it overcometh the world, and worketh by love.

VII.

ON FRIENDSHIP.

PROV. xxvii. 17.

Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

THERE appear to me to be four offices of a good friend, the two latter of which are contained in the figurative language of the text, and specially applicable to social religion.

The first great office of a friend is to try our thoughts by the measure of his judgment, and to task the wholesomeness of our designs and purposes by the feelings of his heart. The knowledge upon which the mind works is such a compound of truth and error, and the mind hath naturally such a fond partiality for her own children, and the heart of the best man is so beset with straitening prejudice, that, conscious of our weakness, we no sooner commence any new thing than we long to discourse of it to our friend, that he may take hold of it with his judgment, and try it by his conscience of good and ill. And being approved by him, we have, as it were, an initial test and first experiment of the conception, which we are thereby encouraged to work into form, and bring out either by word or deed for the welfare of our fellow men. To fulfil this office will require that our friendly affections be subordinated to a sound judgment and an honest heart, otherwise we are not worthy the first and equal confidence of things, and fit only for the inferior station of partisans, bribed by affection into that service which our higher faculty of reason hath not yet approved. For this cause, I doubt not, it was that our Saviour sent His twelve apostles and seventy missionaries, two by two, to preach the gospel, that they

might be to each other a counter-test of all they did and said.

As this office of a good friend is to guard against the imperfections of our nature, and protect the world from the effects, and ourselves from the responsibility, of our folly, the next office of a friend is to protect us from the selfish and wilful and malicious part of our nature. To stand alone in a good cause, to be the first to strike out of the unknown and invisible some great idea or device, is the most royal preeminence which God bestoweth upon His creatures. But if the yearning of the soul to communicate the same be resisted, and it remain buried in our own bosom, then, however good and generous in its first conception it might have been, it will grow full of selfishness, and in the end perhaps reveal itself in malice. It toucheth the soul's pride to possess a great scheme or idea all unto herself, it raiseth her pride of superiority, and exciteth her lust of rule. If no heart will be the partner of her thoughts, or no ear the hearer of her complaints, or if by her own peculiar nature she will confide neither in the one or the other, then let society be upon its guard, for it harboureth one that is dissocial; and let that one be on his guard against himself, for he is in a lonely place, which is cold and friendless, and he is on a high place which is giddy. He loses the capacity of fellowship from the want of it—he loses the capacity of friendship from his nourished selfishness and secrecy—he grows self-willed, submitting his will to no discipline of equality—he grows self-interested because he findeth none fit or worthy to take a part in it. He broods over his purposes alone, grows domineering, and for the execution of his purposes makes tools and instruments of men. Those that are around him he winds and works to his will; he will receive only suppliancy or service, and those who will not give it he sideth from. And so, if he have strength given him, whether of intellect, of taste, of persuasion, or of power, it all cometh under the sway of his selfishness; he becomes the head of a school, sect, or party, which will breed disturbance with the things existent, and generally an evil disturbance, (for selfishness and power are generally evil;) and therefore such a man should be looked to by those

who are interested in things that are already established. This self-collected spirit, which in the end becometh turbulent, a good friend or a band of good friends would have conducted down by degrees, and converted him into a benefactor; and hence it is that good men do sometimes attach themselves to those evil beings like their good genius; as if hopeful to conciliate them to good, or in the evil day to ward off the ill which they might bring to the commonweal.

A third great office of friendship is to awaken us, and lift us up, and set us on nobler deeds. There is living in the heart of man a diviner light which is aye sparkling through the gloom of his benighted nature, and shewing him in the world the light of better ways, which it is the part of a friend to tend more carefully than the virgins of Vesta did the sacred fire, lest it be smothered by the carnal and gross elements which we bear about in us, and its occasional gleam be swallowed by the darkness which covereth the earth, and the gross darkness which covereth the people. There is not a man in whose soul schemes and purposes of a nobler life than he now liveth in the flesh are not ever budding, or rather I should say, thoughts and ideas of a better life, which, if fostered, would form the rudiments of schemes, which schemes being perfected, would constitute a virtuous and pious man out of one who is herding with the vilest of the people. Oh, it toucheth one to the quick to see a mob or rabble of men, chance-collected, addressed by some wise and high-minded minister of truth, held mute while he shews them pictures of excellence, answering with their brightened countenances, with their sighs, haply with their tears, to the true feeling of the noble things which his noble soul deviseth, thereby testifying that they have high faculties for scanning truth, that they can climb to the top of his high argument, and taste the proportions of his finest characters;—I say, it toucheth me to see these men dispersing to wallow again in the trough of their sensuality, or labour in the service of their malicious passions, quarrelling, contending, and fighting for those wretched matters which are scattered upon the dunghill of this earth. Oh for wiser and purer mothers to rear us in our childhood, for skilful masters to open upon our sight

the path of virtue and true nobility, for pastors worthy of the name to feed the souls of the people, and friends to stand around them, and bear us faithful company towards things exalted and pure. Then should you see men, and the sons of men rise in the land, men like unto the sons of God, to contend with those children of the earth, earthy and devilish, which at present by far the greater part among us are found to be. Let it be the office of true friends to do for each other that function which may have been neglected by mothers, and teachers, and pastors, those great functionaries of the commonweal—to bring to light every stifled purpose of good, to rally every reluctant faculty of well-doing, to awaken what is dormant, to chafe what is torpid, to point the way, and shew us wherein we may excel, not others, but ourselves; not to shrink from shewing us our faults, to recover us, to reassure us, to extricate us from dilemmas of the judgment, to resolve us of the casuistry of the conscience, to work upon the irresoluteness of the will, to hold up the hands which hang down, to confirm the feeble knees, to make straight paths to the feet, and to pioneer the way of that great work which in this life it is given unto every one to do.

The fourth good office of a friend is to rally us when we are defeated in our schemes, or overtaken with adversity. And so much is the world alive to this office, as to have chosen it out as the true test; it being one of our best proverbs that a friend in need is a friend indeed. Oh, but a man is well off for friends while things flourish with him! The great world is always ready with its friendly ministry for whatever he may need. The great world will then become our friend, and serve us with a ready and willing ministry of whatever we need,—flattery for the ear, incense for the nostril, sweetness for the taste, beauty and elegance for the eye, rapture and ravishment to the soul. You, too, will take well with them, and they will take well with you while you are rising. They will filch the credit of your prosperity from God and become your patrons; and when you can reflect honour, they will take you into their train, and seat you by their sides. But sure as David, who harped in the palace of Saul, and had Saul's daughter to wife, had to take the wilderness of Sin for his

refuge, and the rock of Machpelah for his habitation, when the countenance of Saul turned against him, so surely shall the man whom prosperity hath exalted have to shift for himself, forlorn and abandoned, when adversity setteth in upon him. And his talents shall now be discovered to have been nought, and his accomplishments to have been nought, and his services to have been nought. All the cords which lifted him on high and held him in his place shall untwist full rapidly, and he shall find himself solitary and unbefriended of all that fashionable crew who heretofore delighted to do him honour. Therefore let every man rising in the world's favour look to his ways, and deal faithfully by his former friends and associates, and most faithfully by his God, that he may have a hiding-place and a secure refuge when the time of his trial and the days of his darkness come. For then he will surely be deserted—the greater part pressing no farther good out of him, a better few willing to help but without the means, and those who have the means and are well disposed hardly knowing the way.

A man in adversity is like a shipwrecked and dismantled ship upon the deserted strand—he needeth much reparation and outfit before he can be of use to any one; a man in prosperity is like a ship full laden with costly goods, which is a prize to every one that is needy, and an honour to every one who hath in her any share or interest. A man who is rejected and despised of the world is like a ship that is not seaworthy, in which no one will risk an atom of his wealth, and which proves a clog upon the course of any free and fair sailing vessel; whereas a man whom the world embraceth with its favours, and who flourisheth in prosperity, is like a convoy ship, under whose lofty and armed sides many sail in safety. Who is he that hath had the world set against him, or whom the world hath dashed from his anchorage-ground, that hath not known, amidst these back-waters of the soul, the good and the strength of heart there is in a friend upon whom to fall back, and by whom to be received as into a haven, and fitted out again for another encounter? Happy is he who hath one into whose ear his soul may tell its calamities, shew its weaknesses, and lay open its wounds; from

whose lips it may receive the consolation and tender counsels it needeth; at whose hand accept the help, and, if need be, the medicine which cures adversity, and whose bitterness is savoury when administered by the hand of a friend! Eloquence might exhaust itself in speaking the praises of a man who can discern the value of a soul in its dismantled state, stripped of all outward embellishments, and struggling hard with its bristling ills and thick-coming trials; who can say, Come to my home with a welcome; come for a season and take shelter until the storm be overpast; come, and I will make thee a chamber upon the wall, where thou shalt be free to go out and in unmolested, and share our bread and our water. I tell you of a truth, my beloved brethren, the man who can so entreat a ruined man, is worth a whole street-ful of visit-exchanging citizens. He is the good Samaritan whom Christ painted to the life for all His followers. He will stand in the judgment, because he took the stranger in, and clothed the naked, and fed the hungry, and gave the thirsty drink. There is immortality in these actions; their memory never fails, and the remembrance of them delights the soul for ever. And if there be one thing for which I would exhort my wealthy and well-conditioned brethren to come out from amongst the gay and giddy spendthrift and heartless world, and conform themselves to grave and sober habits of life far within their means, it is, oh it is for such exploits of Christian friendship, that when men good and true are tried by the Lord with evil days, and tossed out by the ruffian world like wreck and weed, as if the excommunication and brand of Heaven were upon their foreheads, you may have the bread, and the water, and the house-room wherewith to entertain the heartbroken outcast, and harbour him from mockery and insult, until the Lord, having sufficiently tried him, do once more lift upon him the light of His countenance. But the heart, the heart to do such tender acts, is what the world eateth out, and the rust of its riches corrodes; the lust of its pleasures hardens and "petrifies the feeling," the fumes of its vanities intoxicate the head, and pride and ambition turn sour all the milk of human kindness. There is a corruption of your means by extravagance; but what is that

to the corruptions of your soul by those wicked ways after which the world hasteth? Cultivate mercy, humanity, charity, and meekness, which are the fruits of the Holy Ghost. Seek to have the spirit of Christ, and then it shall not be more difficult for worldly people to waste with riotous living the portion of goods which their Father hath divided them, than it shall be for you to bind up the broken-hearted, and to pour the oil of joy into the wounded spirit, and to comfort all who mourn.

Such is the fourfold office which a good and faithful friend can do for us in the pilgrimage of this present life:—First, To weigh and deliberate, and give judgment upon the first fruits of our mind. Secondly, To protect us from the selfish and solitary part of our nature. Thirdly, To speak to and call out those finer and better qualities within us which the customs of this world stifle, and open up to us a career worthy of our powers. Lastly, To succour us in our straits, rally us in our defeats, and bind our spirit in its distresses. Now, as every man hath these four attributes,—infirmity of judgment, selfishness or wilfulness of disposition, inactivity and inertness of nature, and adversity of fortune,—so every man needeth the help of a friend, and should do his endeavour to obtain one. And the fourfold nature of his office requires in a good friend a fourfold qualification for discharging the several parts of it aright. For the first, sympathy with our thoughts and pursuits, for where there is no sympathy there will be no communication; and not only sympathy with them but understanding of them, and a solid judgment and an honest heart to give us good counsel and true upon all our plans. For the second, a generous nature which looks to the commonweal, and will not yield it to the pleasuring of a friend; also a manly and tried mind, which will not veil truth and manhood, even before a friend, so as to give in to his wilfulness, but will be an equal friend or no friend at all. For the third, a high and heroic soul, which can strike out noble duties in every path of life, and behold in all classes, from him that sitteth on the throne to him that grindeth behind the mill, the elements of a heaven-born nature, and the destinee of an immortal glory; and perceiving them, will stimulate us thereto, however much against the stomach of our

own present inclination, or the spirit of our present life. For the fourth, a tender and a true heart, which keeps to its affections, and as it is not beguiled into friendship by outward forms or conditions, so is not alienated by the absence of them, but loves the soul, the unadorned soul, for its own intrinsic qualities; and while it preserves them, will love it in good report and in ill report, in prosperity and in adversity, in life and in death, and for ever. According as these qualities meet in any one, he rises in the scale of friendship; where they all combine together in one, they form a friend more precious to the soul than all which it inherits beneath the sun.

Now, it is not our intention, as it is not our office, to apply these doctrines of true friendship to the occurrences of the natural life which men live in the flesh, or to shew instances how it hath been nobly exemplified in every age of the world, which pertains to the moralist or the sentimentalist; but it is our intention, as it is our duty, to shew what abundant occasion there is for this help of a genuine friend in the religious or spiritual life which we should live by the faith of the Son of God, who died for us and rose again.

In applying this doctrine of true friendship to religious or spiritual life, we observe that the first office of trying and approving the thoughts and purposes of our friend applies chiefly to the beginning and earlier stages of his Christian course. When the soul hath come to be sick of worldly companies, and of superficial excitements, and momentary delights, and desires to go deeper and to search about for the foundations of her happiness and peace, and to meditate upon the high end of her creation, and her eternal destinies; when she perceives the necessity of a change, but discerneth not well what it is to be, or whence it is to come, but is dissatisfied and ill at ease, —then who shall tell the value of a friend who hath already made that mysterious passage through conviction and conversion, and struggled in those deep waters of the soul, who can take the measure of the distress and discover the remedy, and the Rock of salvation, which is Christ? Oh! it is a great office of friendship to help a man in whom God hath made His arrows to stick fast, to shew him how to deal with the huge

convictions of sin which distress his soul, and the fears which overcloud his hopes—to find him a rest, a tranquillity, a peace, a joy, that he may go on his way rejoicing. For want of good counsel at this the setting out of Christian life, many souls stumble to the end of their days, and die in doubt and in darkness; some trusting in their outward works, and some in their inward feelings, and some in their religious ceremonies, —the first bondsmen, the second superstitious, the third formalists, and all in error,—"for no other foundation can any man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ." This step being taken, and the desperate made hopeful through the forgiveness by faith, and being entered to the school of Christ to drink into His spirit, and follow His discipline, all old things are done away, and all things become new, and he feels as in a land of vision, where all the objects and the ways of the people are strange, and much, much doth he need some sage friend at his side, from whose experience his ideas and principles may take measure and proportion. The great end of his being is now the glory of God, which formerly he thought not of; the organ by which he finds out his way is new, being faith, not sight; his fundamental principles of action are new, being the answer of a good conscience, and the unchangeable word of God,—no longer the expedient customs or fashionable forms of life; the sentiments and feelings which fill up the details of his life are new, being duty to God and charity to men, forgiveness of enemies, and inward purity to the very core —no longer envy, pride, malice, vanity, or moral honesty and natural goodness of heart; his forms of speech are grave, chaste, savoured with the salt of wisdom, no longer one of those latitudinarian dialects, pervaded with truth and falsehood, satire, scandal, and swearing, in which the unconverted permit themselves; and the outward ritual of life is so new,—glee gone mute, tastes for the visible grown weak, habits simplified, homes ordered against all fashion, and haunts, not of levity, but of gravity. All these things, inward and outward, amongst which the new life is spent, burst upon the young convert so fresh and vivid, that, like a man transported from a savage to a civilised life, he needs much, and will much profit by, an experienced friend, to explain to him the measures and

bearings of things, and how they come into harmony with one another. But this first stage being passed, and the young convert having been fairly planted in the house of God, and brought to the feet of Jesus, being prevented from running wild in extravagant fanaticism, or losing himself in hidden mystery, or satisfying himself with bare formality, being brought in simplicity to learn of Christ, he must afterwards be left to measure his thoughts and purposes by His word, and to regulate his spirit according to the Spirit of God, which judgeth all things, and is judged of none. In these, as in other things, I think Bunyan, that truly spiritual classic, hath shewn his sagacity. When *Christian* is fairly out of the city of *Destruction*, he makes *Evangelist* appear to him, and gives him a roll for the direction of his future journey. So when once a man hath believed in Christ, I would have him, like St Paul, to take counsel of no one, but to go unto the law and to the testimony, and to order all things between conscience and God through the mediation of Christ alone. At this stage, then, I make the first office of a Christian friend in a good degree to cease.

Now, with regard to the second office of Christian friendship, in protecting us from the selfish and solitary part of our nature, I consider that without it the Christian is liable to a fourfold disease, according to the direction into which his faculties run: if towards the creation and providence of God, they are full of sad contemplations and endless moralities; if to himself, ascetic, self-troubled, and tortured; if to the command of others, he is a religious bigot, and persecutor upon principle; if to the character of others, he is an inquisitor, an over-zealous Puritan, who finds in no community the marks of the true Church, but lives dismembered from all religions, in himself and with himself, and too often only for himself.

With regard to the third office of Christian friendship, that of cherishing the latent powers of well-doing, and pressing us onward to still higher attainments, it is needed to the very end of our pilgrimage. For that notion of perfection into which some few speculators in these and other days have been betrayed, is only an evidence of the blindness of their con-

science, and the inferiority of that rule by which they measure themselves. In our Christian course, we constantly need to be stimulated and roused to higher attainments, lest we fall under the mighty enemies whom we have to encounter.

Now, the fear is, that the spirit should grow weary, and strike a compromise with the body and the natural soul, that the forces of action and of resistance should come into equilibrium, and we should cease from further advancement. And herein consists the office of a friend to stir us up, to shew us the things yet unattempted, to shew us the infinite resources of the grace of God yet unoccupied, to rouse us out of our lethargy, and urge us forward from one degree of grace into another, until we reach the stature of a perfect man in Christ, "that our path may be as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

The last office of a Christian friend is to give us consolation in our adversities, and shew us the way of recovery; when, through the multitude of our temptations, we are overtaken in a fault; to shew us wherein we are to be blamed; if we stand not fast, but give ground, to help us; if we are utterly baffled and defeated, to succour us; when we are overclouded with doubt, to shew us the salvation of our God; and when He hideth His face from us, to keep us from being utterly confounded; when He brings upon us calamities of providence, to shew us the good lessons which are concealed under their gloomy signs; when He sendeth us bereaving afflictions, to sustain us, that we faint not under the heaviness of His afflictive hand. It is the office of a Christian friend to rejoice with us when we do rejoice, and to weep with us when we weep; to help us to bear our burdens, and to give glory to God when His billows pass over us. The life of a Christian is more full of trials than that of another man. For, besides having to struggle with the natural infirmities of humanity, and the persecutions of the world superadded, he hath moreover the difficulties which arise from a rebellious will, and perverse inclinations, and a misdirected mind, and false tastes, and erroneous judgments, and a whole nature already conformed to an opposite way of life from that which

it is now the desire of his soul to alienate and tear itself away. To help us in all these struggles against the difficulties and impediments of the way, is the office of a Christian friend.

Now, to induce you to discharge these offices of Christian friendship to one another, let your common cause and common necessity be the argument. You are members of one body, which is Christ; ye have one spirit, even the Spirit of Christ; and ye have one hope of your calling. When one member suffers, all should suffer; when one member is caught away by the evil one, the whole hath suffered loss. The Church of Christ ought to love like one man, and to be bound together like one man. Their sweet fellowship ought to be a constant contrast to the divided world, and a Goshen in the midst of the land: not plagued with its plagues, nor vexed with its torments. To conclude, I think that every one who cometh over from the world hath a claim even of justice upon the Christian; for that step involves with it the loss of many former companions, in the abandonment of worldly honour and glory for the cross of Christ, and converteth this cheerful world into a weary wilderness, and the pride of life into a troublous pilgrimage.

VIII.

SOCIAL RELIGION THE NATURAL OUTFLOW OF PRIVATE RELIGION.

ALL social religion must rest upon personal religion as its foundation, and personal religion cometh out of the desire of our well-being, the feeling of our wants, and the desire to have our wants supplied. To escape impending judgment and wrath to come, and from present fear to be delivered into good hope of the glory of God; to obtain the forgiveness of sins, and therewith the blessedness of those whose transgression is hid, and whose sin is covered; to be brought into the way of righteousness, and confirmed in the paths of peace;—these inward benefits, and others of the like kind, are the great standing inducements to think betimes of God, and of Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. The arguments for a religious life depend not upon the specialties or casualties of man's condition; they come not into play at a certain age, like the laws of civil society, nor at a certain age are they relaxed, like the fashions of society, from the tyranny of which the aged are generally exempt; they bear upon householders or heads of families, and no less upon single and solitary men; they will not give way before the immunities of any rank, or the prerogatives of any place, however noble; and no misfortune, imprisonment, or exile can set us loose from these obligations, as no prosperity or elevation can set us above them: for why?—because every man, wherever he is, and whoever he is, has a soul to be saved, a Saviour to redeem and save it, a work of salvation given him to work out, a Creator to answer to, and everlasting life or everlasting destruction to inherit. Therefore, meat and drink are not more necessary to man than are the faith of Christ and the

sanctification of the Spirit; and meat and drink are not more the personal, anxious concern of every living man, than the knowledge and the obedience of the gospel are and ought to be his personal, anxious concern. For his soul is more precious than his body, his immortality more valuable than his life, and eternity more momentous than the span-breadth of time. Whosoever, therefore, is religious for form's sake, or for decency's sake, or for the sake of a good example to others, forgetful of these his personal interests, that man is a fool, his notion of religion is foolish, and the end of it is foolishness, and worse than foolishness; for he hath not considered his ways, nor applied his heart unto heavenly wisdom. He hath made God's worship a convenience, a spectacle, a speculation of temporal profit; he hath poured out his soul to the idolatry of an established church or of public opinion; he hath not descended into the depths of his soul, to set it in order before the Lord; he is an outward-surface man, who can brook the superficial glance of the world, but the eye of the Heart-searcher, who trieth the reins and unfoldeth the mysteries of man, he shall not stand. He shall be searched and known; his hypocrisy and folly shall be discovered by Him before whom all things are naked and open, and with whom every one of us hath to do.

If a man had only to save appearances, and keep up the comely face of religion before his own soul, and before all the people; if there were no inward diseases to be cured, no obligations of feeling to be rectified, nor shameful thoughts to be purged out; if there were no heart-sicknesses to be ministered to, nor grievous discontents to be allayed, no losses, crosses, and mortal bereavements to be comforted; if the world were as noble as man, and his wants found ready supplies, his highest thoughts welcome entertainment in the world; and instead of being dragged down at every hand from her freedom and nobility, the soul were at every hand wooed and beckoned to higher seats and larger freedom by the fashions and customs of the present life; if man were the being he could wish to be, if he fulfilled himself, if he magnified himself and made himself honourable, and carried into practice those

measures of truth which in his soul he conceiveth and longeth after; or, finally, if in natural knowledge there were any discipline, fostering, or nursing of the highest, purest, best faculties of man,—then I were willing to forego the universal bounden obligation of religion upon every mortal, and permit them to make a cloak of it, putting it on upon occasions, and for occasions casting it off again. But while man is, by the baseness, falsehood, and foolishness of life, by its drudgery, its hypocrisy, and its idleness constantly demeaned, and all his better qualities diminished; while the godly within him is obscured by a world that hath always been ungodly, and the aspirings within him chained down by a world that hath always been tyrannical, and the everlasting spirit made to anchor itself to things unstable, as fashions, interests, fancies, and speculations,—while this degradation goeth on and this iniquity is practised, it never can be that man should be beyond the necessity of religion which his soul needeth: as a nurse, that it may get out of swaddling bands; as a mother, that it may be sweetly furnished with just principles and rules of action; as a teacher, that it may be introduced into the higher walks of wisdom and godliness, which it wanteth as the staff of its life, as the rod of its correction, as the guider of its goings, and as the portion of its happy inheritance both in time and through eternity.

Therefore, whether you regard your obligations to Christ the Son of God, who came to save you; or your responsibility to God, who will not hold you guiltless if you neglect such great salvation; or your own consolation in the adversities of life, or your own perfection in the noble part of your being, your present or your eternal welfare, religion is a personal concern that may not be omitted for any sake, but for the sake of which every temporal good, from the lowest to the highest—that is, from mere convenience to the loss of life—may and ought to be postponed, but which itself may for nothing under the sun be postponed.

While I thus plead so absolutely for personal religion as the only basis of social religion, it is not out of insensibility to the comeliness of family and congregational worship, nor,

though our Church hath no provision for such, to the soul-expanding and heart-exciting influences of cathedral service, where the songs of Jehovah, which once were sung to organ and cymbal and trumpet in Zion, are renewed, in nobler and more magnificent temples than Zion could boast, to the sound of more perfect instruments. But while I regard the outward seemliness of these things, I wish the soul to be present in the sound,—not the soul of harmony only, but the soul of adoration and praise, that when it ascendeth to Jehovah's ear, it may be accepted of Him "who is a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth." Also, while I thus take the value of social worship away from form, and build it on inward spirit, I am alive to the necessity of outward forms for man's present being, and contend that it is a measure of good government to see that religious rites be duly celebrated through all the temples of the land; and were the state now rashly to withdraw its hand from religion, which it hath taught to depend upon its sustenance, I perceive that much confusion would ensue, and much convulsion and peril, before religion established herself upon the common wants of men, as industry and frugality and other personal household virtues are established. But while I am alive to these considerations, I cannot blind myself that I should not perceive that there are in the community multitudes, and those the most influential, who are moved to waiting regularly upon the temples of religion, in order to set a good example, and do a duty to the neighbourhood in which they dwell; many who think religion beholden to them, and God their debtor all the week for their Sabbath mortification; many also who go out of zeal for a particular doctrine or sect; many out of curiosity; many to while away the weary hours of Sabbath; many out of custom; many they know not why,—so that every congregation before which you stand up to minister, being less or more moved by these erroneous, or at best secondary motives, I have judged it necessary again to expound those great, universal, and everlasting motives which bind religion upon every man to whom the knowledge of salvation by Christ hath arrived through the tender mercy of our God.

When religion hath so prevailed over the inward man as to possess it of the divine knowledge, the Christian law, and the principles of spiritual well-being, it cometh to pass that social religion groweth of its own accord, a wise and godly discipline is produced, the spirit of love and charity reigneth over schism and division; humility and poverty of spirit in respect to ourselves, kindness and gentleness in respect to others, take the place of the envies and emulations and grudgings of the world; outward decency is the expression of inward reverence; the harmony of the voice of the attuning of the heart; the oneness of prayer of the single-heartedness of the whole; the stillness, the anxiety, and the eagerness become proofs of zeal; faith cometh by hearing, conviction cometh out of reproof, the word of God is profitable unto all things, and the man of God is thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work. Not only would men, thus possessed with one common principle of religion, be drawn regularly to the house of God by an inward motive, and while there, held in a mood suitable to the various parts of the service, but over their ordinary meetings a spirit of order, and peace, and wisdom would prevail; and for prayer and fellowship, and other recreations of the soul, express meetings would be held; and the whole intercourse of life would be impressed with a spirit of truth and sincerity, and all hypocrisy and dissimulation would be done away with; and in place of formality there would be affection; and in place of ridicule there would be counsel; for satire, kindly admonition; for enmities, forgiveness; for malice, benevolence; and charity and love instead of unrighteousness,—all which we shall endeavour to shew at large.

And, first, the bond of union which is produced by the presence of Christian principle within the breast. For when religion hath been founded in the common wants and common benefits of our common nature, it is not possible that it should not form a bond of closest alliance between man and man. Being a principle of such extent, affecting, not a part of man, but the whole of man, and transforming every man into the common image of God, it cannot be but that it will produce the strongest fellow-feeling, and lay the foundation of the strongest social principle. Even though it

had not been a part of its doctrine to extinguish envies and divisions, and to enforce love and unity, it would have had this effect by the natural influence of its common principles,—one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one hope of our calling, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all. Any one of these, being really, not formally present; being felt, not professed; being acted upon as a principle, not idly entertained as a matter of opinion, were sufficient to be the basis of a community: all together they produce the strongest bond by which the world is blessed. This will appear with great conviction if you will consider the effect which is produced by any one of these common sympathies when exhibited in those minor degrees which the world contains. One common sovereign, who loves his people and is worthy of their love, begets amongst them a loyal fealty, which makes them forget their private convenience to contribute to his royal state, and, when need is, forget their private quarrels to fight for the throne of his fathers. Of which, let the history of the whole world bear testimony. One common law is the basis of a deeper and more enduring union still, the union of a free nation, which is more powerful still than the union of a loyal nation; and when the two combine together, they render a nation almost invincible. How strong this sense of common right becomes in a people, is best to be seen when it is threatened with any injury. What gatherings of the land when any point of constitutional law is threatened,—what remonstrances to the guardian authorities of the state,—what fearful demonstrations, which, being coolly and resolutely made by a whole people, no power on earth can withstand! And hence ariseth out of many divided hearts the heart of a nation, out of many contending powers is produced the power of a nation; and so the character of a nation, the pride of a nation, the terror of a nation, and all that enters into that sacred name, the commonwealth. These two principles of union both concur in Christians, for Christ is their Lawgiver and their King, whose laws and government inspire in those who have in truth submitted themselves to their gracious protection, a feeling

of heavenly citizenship and of Christian rights, and therewith a bond of brotherhood kindred to that which is felt by the loyal subjects of the same wise and gracious prince, and the citizens of the same free and privileged community. This bond of union hath suggested to the minds of the apostles many beautiful expressions; such as, "Our citizenship," (for so the word signifies in the Greek,) "our citizenship is in heaven." "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, which in times past were not a people, but now are the people of God." The law we are under is called the perfect law of liberty, the royal law of the Scriptures. And in these terms we are spoken to: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." So that religious men are a nation within a nation, or rather they are a nation scattered among all nations, who are not divided by seas nor borders, by rivers nor mountains, from each other's sympathy and love; they live under one law and under one Lord, and have a common interest in each other. They pray for the common weal of all, and they act for the common weal of all; they fight against the common enemies of Christ, the devil, the world, and the flesh, under a common Captain of their salvation, and for a common inheritance in which they shall dwell together, see each other face to face, and know each other even as they are known by the Searcher of their hearts.

Now, observe upon another side of the mind how common affections join men together, and form sweet associations in the bosom of the same community—how families and kindred are united together in the tenderest fraternities, which, though far separated and disjoined, keep up the intercourse of kindness in defiance of every obstacle, find a thousand apologies to shake off business and meet together, and if they meet not face to face, meet oft in memory, in hope, in prayer, and in discourse, and keep up the best debate which the soul can make with the narrow conditions with which upon the earth she is invested. And wherever they go, they still remember home; and however they may prosper in foreign

parts, they still sigh for home; and at length to home they direct their weary steps, though it were but to die, and be buried in the grave by the side of their fathers. "And Jacob charged his sons, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people; bury me with my fathers, where they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, where they buried Isaac and Rebekah, and where I buried Leah. And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people." Now, this feeling which binds men together in families, and unites them to the dwelling-place and to the graves of their fathers, Christians have in the strongest sense. By what name doth Jehovah prefer to be known?—our Father which art in heaven. By what name doth Christ prefer to be called?—our Friend, who sticketh closer than a brother; our Elder Brother, who laid down his life for the rest of the children. "Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same, that by death he might destroy him that hath the power of death." And what is heaven but the house of our Father? "In my Father's house are many mansions; behold I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am there ye may be also." And what are we here but sojourners and pilgrims, who seek a country, even a heavenly, a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God? So that there is the feeling of a common Father from whom we are descended, of a common inheritance which we have lost, of a common Redeemer and Brother who has won it back to us, of a wilderness through which we are travelling to our home, of an enemy's country round about, than which no combination of feelings can be stronger to unite a people together,—adding to the loyalty of a common Lord, and to the privilege of a common law, the affection of a common family, the union of a common adversity, the hope of a common deliverance, and the pursuit of one common inheritance, which had been wrested from us, and now again hath been restored. If, when the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, they were like men that dream, their mouth filled with laughter and their tongue with singing, then how much more ought the

family of Christ, who have been redeemed from the bondage of sin and the fear of death into everlasting hope, to go on their way rejoicing, with one heart and one soul, singing the praises of Him who hath redeemed them out of all nations, and kindred, and tongues, and is bringing them to the habitations of His holiness, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest, where there is fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore!

And, again, there is the bond of a common interest, through which Christians make common cause, and that not the interests of time and sense, which so often divide men asunder, by means of their envies, and jealousies, and malignant passions, but the interests of the soul, which are promoted by love and unity, and of which envy and jealousy are the death —the interests of eternity, which are not impoverished by being spread amongst all, nor increased by being restricted to a few. When men are driven, by the fear of a common loss, or the foresight of a common advantage, to forego their petty jealousies, and join hand in hand, in what confederations they will league together, and through what hardships they will struggle! Common interest will bind banditti in the woods, and pirates upon the high seas; it will make thieves honourable and honest to one another, and keep in faithful community gangs of felons, whose hand is against every man, and against whom every bribe, even pardon and forgiveness, is held out, insomuch that it is among them the greatest of all crimes to bear witness against a confederate. This same principle joins honest men in corporations and companies for assisting each other in the pursuit of gain, and often so strongly worketh upon them, that they will forget the rights of their brethren, and become the oppressors of their kind in the pursuit of their common good; so that it hath been often remarked, that the tyranny of a corporation is the severest of all,—which proves that common interest is so powerful a motive as to carry men beyond the limits of rectitude, of affection, and even of natural feeling. This principle of a common interest uniteth Christians together, no less than worldly men; for, though the Christian calling giveth them no additional interest in

the silver and gold of this world, but rather decreaseth that which, as men, they already have, they get an interest in many things of which they were formerly careless. The interests of righteousness and well-being upon the earth, against which the wickedness and pride of men are waging constant warfare; the interests of peace, which the nature of the heart doth always mar; the liberty of conscience, against which power worketh without ceasing; the interests of the poor, and the needy, and the oppressed; the interests of the prisoner and the profligate, whom society hath cast off from her embrace; the interests of the degraded heathen, of the deluded, and of the ungodly everywhere; those spiritual interests which the multitude of men care nothing about, and which, for them, might perish from the earth; in short, the interests of the Church, which, in this world, is like the woman in the Apocalypse, which was cast unto the dragon;—all these cares and interests, which appertain to the religious well-being of man, hang heavy upon the children of God, and bind them together in those societies and fraternities of which this city and empire are full.

Time would fail me if I were to speak of the other principles of union which there are to associate Christians in the bonds of brotherhood. Besides those of common government, of common affection, and of common interest, their common baptism, by which they are admitted to the covenant of the purification of the blood of Christ; their common communion of the Supper, by which they are made partakers of the same body and blood of Christ; their common faith, which is a new organ for perceiving truth; their common hope, which is an anchor cast within the veil, sure and steadfast; their common peace, which the world cannot give and cannot take away; their common joy, in which a stranger doth not intermeddle; and, which includeth all the rest, their common charity and love.

Now, if it be found a consistent law of human nature, in all its states and conditions, that a common sentiment hath ever the effect of establishing to itself some form and body of outward communion and fellowship, interchanges of visits, words of politeness and friendship, meetings for sociality,

academies for knowledge, associations for charitable and benevolent purposes, insomuch that in science there is hardly a branch, in jurisprudence hardly a department, in philanthropy hardly a walk, in the large catalogue of human sufferings and wants hardly one genuine kind, for which, in this city, to its immortal honour be it spoken, there is not an association voluntarily formed of members the most diverse in rank, opinion, and disposition, and line of life, in everything save that particular case which associates them together, and causeth them to organise themselves, to hold frequent meetings, to contribute time, thought, and means,—how should it be otherwise than that a number of men, who, not in one sentiment, or in one affection, or in one interest, but in all, or almost all, are identified or striving to be identified,—how is it possible that such men, soul of one soul, and heart of one heart, and mind of one mind, nay, I might say bone of one bone, and flesh of one flesh,—for are they not all of one body, whereof Christ is the head?—how is it possible that Christian men, embosoming such common feelings as I have above insufficiently set forth, should not meet together, should not long to meet together, should not shun and forego every thing to meet together,—how is it possible, save by bolts and bars, and main force, they should be hindered to meet together or should be kept asunder? The thing were the greatest anomaly in human nature, the most wonderful and unaccountable phenomenon which the history of mankind hath exhibited,—so wonderful, that in all its vacillations, and oddities, and absurdities, human nature hath not, for eighteen hundred years, exhibited such a phenomenon. For the people of God have always met together, and love to talk together, and to pray together, and to sing psalms together, and will continue to do so while the bands of Christian truth and sympathy hold together,—ay, and until they are dislocated by bigotry, sectarianism, and schism.

Those who feel these common principles and sentiments in their heart, cannot keep asunder; their souls are bound by ties over which time and place and worldly interest have not any power. They are one by a thousand obligations, any one of which is enough to join the associations of the present world.

And that they who are so united should keep asunder, is the most complete of all evidence that they have not, in this, the Spirit of Christ, and that, however they may profess, they are none of His. If the diversities of Christians keep them asunder in their hearts, and cause them to think and speak uncharitably of one another, that is proof enough that they are under ecclesiastical pride, and not under Christian charity. If the diversity of rank keep them asunder, that is proof enough that they are under worldly pride, not under Christian humility. If the diversity of learning or wisdom keep them asunder, it is proof sufficient that they are under the dominion of intellectual conceit, not of spiritual humility. If the diversity of doctrine keep those asunder who hold Christ the Head, and engender sectarian pride, then are they under the paltry spirit of a religious corporation, not of the great household and community of saints.

I know how the spirit of strife and discord stealeth into Christian breasts, and how a spirit of high-mindedness will possess whole bodies of Christians, and they will plume themselves upon being the people of God; and likewise how, at this day, the Christian Church is rent asunder by various divisions of doctrine, and discipline, and government; and it would argue great inexperience to expect that it should be otherwise while the name Christian standeth for every one that is baptized with water and partaketh of the bread and wine of the communion. But notwithstanding these outward divisions, there is in every section of the Christian Church, and through every Christian nation, a people in whose breasts those principles and sentiments of brotherhood are present, and who love each other with a constant love, and pray for each other with a constant prayer; who are a sprinkling of salt amongst the nations, that hinder them from corruption, and preserve for them the tender providence of God. Those are the people who are Christians indeed, under the influences mentioned above,—whose breast is full of brotherhood, whose mouth is full of blessing, and whose hand is full of benefits. These men, in spite of national distinctions and national aversions, in spite of dividing tongues and customs, and in spite of dividing rank, without any place to meet together,

except the place of hope beyond death and the grave, are in closest bonds,—feel in common, labour in common, endure in common; and you shall find them the same all the world over;—abstaining from companies of worldly men, who sacrifice to mirth and jollity, and from vain companies, which sacrifice to levity and ostentation, and from companies of wits, who sacrifice truth to cleverness and satire,—keeping themselves unspotted from the world for the service of God; living upon those inward feelings which we have described above, and in them delighting, whether they be found at the helm of state or grinding behind the mill.

I know that outward appearances are against the argument of this discourse, and that those called Christians do oft speak bitterly and contemptuously of each other. I see it, and I lament over it; and this day I have prescribed the remedy, which consists in the spiritual nutrition of those sentiments of brotherhood which have been set forth. If, instead of lauding and applauding our several sects, churches, and opinions, and fixing upon the points in which we differ from each other, we would be content to use those excellent things which we have had derived to us from our godly ancestors as arguments of our inferiority, and incentives to perfection, and those things in which we differ as arguments of our imperfection, and motives to our charity and forbearance; if, instead of keeping ourselves constantly in the attitude of judging others, we would preserve the attitude of loving others, and hoping of them all things that are hopeful, and hoping even against hope, we would come, by the blessing of God, first into the condition of mutual respect, then of mutual esteem wherein we were estimable, and of exhortation wherein we were lacking, and of rebuke wherein we were blame-worthy. But would there be any bitterness of spirit? would there be any barbed words of controversy? any contempt, any falsification or disguising of the truth? No; not a word. But there would be a deep-toned feeling, a serious spirit of inquiry, an ardent breathing of love, a union of fervent charity, manly boldness, uncompromising faithfulness, yet perfect brotherhood, which, methinks, were this age to see, it would hardly know, so long hath it been fed, and so plentifully

gorged with philippics or eulogy, with slander or flattery, with virulence, violence, and all ungenerousness.

Into the causes of this anti-social aspect of religion, it is not my province now to enter. Suffice it that I have pointed out the great, everlasting bond of brotherhood which there is among the members of Christ, and out of which all social worship that is worthy of the name must come, by the same natural influence by which affection produceth the society of families, common laws, and communities—the society of states, and common interest—the many more private associations of life. And if it be not thought enthusiastic or fanatical in the learned oft to meet together in their societies, and for the honour of learning to found colleges and universities and seminaries of knowledge, and to send forth travelling Fellows into foreign parts, and to have foreign members of every country, and keep up the traffic and merchandise of knowledge all the world over, and otherwise construct that outward establishment and activity of knowledge which is the glory of a nation;—and if for the sake of justice (that quality in man more godlike than knowledge) we have all over the land, in every city and town, courts and counsellors and magistrates, and, lest injustice should fall out, send forth twice a year, into every corner of the land, royal judges to make their blessed circuits, and hold their godlike assize of justice, whereby the honest heart of the whole land is made glad; —and if, for good government and security of the commonwealth, we have meetings of freeholders, and suffer all the grossness and violence of elections, and have our high courts of parliament, and our king over all, and such an establishment of governors, defenders, and officers of every name, as costeth the people dear, which, nevertheless, the people cheerfully sustaineth, being well and faithfully administered;—shall we not, for religion's sake, for the sake of our soul's good government and security, for the sake of the Church of Christ, which is the pillar and ground of the truth; for the sake of each man's several well-being through eternity; for the sake of the purity of faith, that our children may have the water of life pure and unadulterated;—shall we not meet for the worship of the Most High God, who ruleth

in heaven and in earth, and make His name glorious among the nations, and proclaim it to the distant lands, the dwellers in the isles of the sea, the lonely inhabitants of the deserts of Kedar, and the tenants of the rocks? For all this unburdening of our souls to the God of our salvation,—for all this indulgence of our common sympathies,—for all this expression of our benevolence to foreign lands and distant isles,—shall we be called enthusiasts, if we meet, Sabbath after Sabbath, in the house of God? Shall we be called fanatical, if we meet in smaller companies during the week? Shall we be called mad, if we associate over the land, and join together in brotherly bands, and lift the horn of our power on high, and know each other's hearts, and sharpen each other's faces, that we may prevail against the powers of darkness which reign upon the earth, and stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free? Then is knowledge fanatical, and justice is superstition, and civil government is madness; which when any one is reduced by his argument to confess, he may be safely left there to alter his position, or be held as himself the advocate of madness.

IX.

THE GOOD OF SOCIAL RELIGION TO THE RELIGIOUS.

PROV. XXVII. 17.

Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

I PURPOSE in this discourse to open up the good fruits which flow unto your own bosoms from communicating your religious feelings, and holding social intercourse in your religious duties, and joining, as here we do, from Sabbath to Sabbath, in the public worship of God. And as we shewed that the rudiments and first principles of social religion ought to be laid in each separate heart, so shall we now shew that the gain of it is first returned into each separate heart.

For the sake of opening up the good fruits to be derived in their own bosoms by those who, being already personally religious, follow nature's suggestion, and communicate with each other upon that which their soul cherisheth in common, I have chosen that beautiful proverb of Solomon, "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend;" because it forcibly expresseth the effect of religious converse and communion by a beautiful figure, which likewise not unhappily represents the way in which the effect is produced. Iron sharpeneth iron by removing the rust which hath been contracted from their lying apart; so intercourse between friend and friend rubbeth down the prejudices which they have contracted in their separate state. The iron having removed the rust which ate into the good stuff of the blade, and hindered its employment for husbandry or war, straightway applieth itself to the metallic substance, brings it to a polish and to an edge, sheweth its proper temper, and fits it for its proper use;—so the intercourse of friends having removed the prejudices which were

foreign to the nature and good condition of each, and which, while they remained, did but fester and hurt the good temper of their souls, proceeds in the next place to bring out the slumbering spirit which lay hid, to kindle each other into brightness, and prepare each other for action. Again, when by hard service and rough handling the iron hath lost its edge, and grown unfit for further use, if you bring it again to its former companion, though equally disabled, they again prepare each other for action; and again and again, until the substance of both be well-nigh worn away, before which their master, grateful for their good service, hangs them upon the wall, in honour and triumph, amongst the memorials of his ancestry. So when friend, by the intercourse of friend, being polished and hardened, goes forth into active life, and, after various rough adversities or hard encounters, grows weary or disabled, and revisits the former companion of his soul, haply as much belaboured by toil and trouble, (for who, in this world of care, escapeth it?) then the two, exchanging their various experiences, recounting their dangers past, and their present condition, are refreshed again; they open up their schemes to one another, their difficulties and their fears; and, before the good countenance and encouragement of our friend, our difficulties, like the great mountain before Zerubbabel, become a plain; we feel like new men again; our countenance is renewed, and we go forth to renew the struggle in the sea of difficulties wherewith we are encompassed. Which friendship, if it be not mere worldly friendship—which too often is enmity with God—but true intercommunion of the spirit, I may carry out the figure and say, that when they are worn out in His service the Almighty will give them rest, and translate them in honour and triumph to the house of His glory, where, amongst the spoils and trophies of His victorious Son, won from the adversary of souls, they shall remain for ever in honour and glory.

As God, the possessor of all good, is likewise the author of all good; and as the Son of God—though He possessed the sovereignty of things created, and enjoyed the praise of the unfallen orders of creation, and above them the confidence of His Father's bosom—did, for the pleasure of communicating

hope and gladness of heart to fallen man, forego all He enjoyed in heaven—did disarray Himself of all His glory, and take upon Him the form of a servant;—so every one who weareth the image of the Father and the Son, or aspireth to wear it, must not only cultivate his own inward well-being, his own riches of knowledge and spiritual understanding, but go forth to communicate the same; and the more wickedness he is surrounded with, the more must he be stirred up against it; and the more difficulties he encounters, the more is the argument of this necessity, and the more should be the assiduity of his endeavours. Which features of the Divine character, if we neglect to copy, we do in so far lose the likeness of God, and continue in our natural likeness, or approach unto the likeness of the devil, who, though one of the worst and most powerful of spirits, useth his wisdom only for darkening the understanding of others, and his power for keeping them in miserable bondage, and so reapeth to himself bitterness of spirit, and in the end greater damnation. He knoweth no happiness in the possession of all his glorious faculties, because he communicateth none; he is miserable in the midst of all his knowledge, because it sheweth him no good; in his sovereignty over hell and over the darkness of this world, he is sovereign only in anguish and dismay, because his soul is incapable of well-doing, and sickens with jealousy at the sight of contentment. And if any man, as he groweth in any acquisition, grow not in the desire of communicating it to others—if, while he teaches its sweetness to his own taste, and its goodly effects upon his own condition, he glows not with the desire of teaching others how they also may become in like manner blessed, and, so far as he can spare them of his blessings, at least suffering them to partake of the crumbs which fall from his table,—then, whatever it be, (such is the retribution of God,) it shall turn and change its very nature upon him. Like the apple of Sodom, it shall become to him hollow-hearted, or full only of disgust. Like the little book which the prophet in the Apocalypse was commanded to eat, it shall be in its first part sweetness, and its after effects gall and wormwood.

Now, though we will not take for a text that similitude

which was meant only for the sake of illustration, and not of reality; yet, so apt is the resemblance between the manner of the natural and of the moral operations, that we shall thence draw the division of our discourse, which we mean to be of two parts. For the iron hath upon the iron which it sharpeneth two effects: the first, to remove the rust and impurities which are contracted apart; the second, to give polish of surface, and keenness of edge, and beauty and usefulness, to that which formerly was unseemly and useless. Agreeably thereto, we shall first speak of the advantage of meeting and encountering each other, though it were even a little roughly, for the purpose of rubbing down those peculiarities, and wearing out those prejudices, which solitude and recluseness beget in religion as well as in other things; and secondly, of the positive advantage to be derived from intercommunion of religious feeling, in the way of confirmation and encouragement wherever we are right, and of further suggestion and inspiration beyond what we had ourselves conceived.

In a former discourse we shewed the effects of seclusion and secrecy in the walks of the human mind: how in knowledge, unless the assiduous desire to possess was coupled with the benevolent desire to communicate, there was not only lost to the people the services of an intellectual light which should guide their activity of mind, as the lights of heaven guide their activity of body, but there was lost much more to the individual himself, in whom, instead of a noble ambition of knowledge, and a high relish of its blessings, there is produced a lean and threadbare bookishness, a slavery of the cell; and instead of a glorious deliverance from prejudice, self-mastery and self-guidance of the understanding, the dictatorial magistracy over a school, the law-giving and domineering over a few slaves, by whom he is surrounded and admired for a short season, but despised by the liberal and enlightened world, of whose thoughts his seclusion renders him unworthy while he lives; and when he dies, his works are shelved with all their prejudices, have a short life perhaps in the admiration of his enslaved followers, with the first generation of whom his labours and his knowledge are haply consigned to the grave. The merchant, again, who commu-

nicates not what he gains, but saves and stores it all, may do so at first for the best and wisest ends; but, sure as God is a God of charity, and wisheth no man to hide his talents in the earth, it cometh to pass that the rust of his hoarded metal, the canker of the gold and silver, eateth into his soul, and works therein the most base and downward inclinations which the world holds—the adoration of mammon, which is the root of all evil, the most vulgar pride, the most ignorant self-sufficiency, the most debased standard of worth and excellency, contempt of benevolence and charity, forgetfulness of all noble or even natural relationships and alliances, even of father and mother, if they be not wealthy enough, and in the end degrading the soul in gross avarice and penuriousness, and misery in its worst and ugliest forms. So also it is with the man of sensibility, who makes a banquet of his own feelings, despising to communicate them if they be pleasant, and scorning to seek sympathy for them if they be painful; who never fails to become a misanthrope, full of moralisings which end in no good; full of grief which will have no cure; mocking the calamities of others, and laughing at the means which they take to remedy them.

From this tendency of secrecy and seclusion to change the nature of everything which one calleth his own, to make good evil, and bitter sweet, religion is not exempt, which, having been bestowed on the soul by the free grace of God, must with the same freedom be communicated, according to the rule of Scripture, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." The heart being filled with good feelings towards all men, must liberally utter them; the mind being filled with devices of well-doing, must not allow them to be unattempted; our treasury being filled with plenty by God, must be used for well-doing. All our talents must have use, and all our profiting must appear; "our light so shining before men that they may glorify our Father which is in heaven." There is only one limitation that I remember in Scripture, that we cast not our pearls before swine, lest they trample them under foot, and turn again and rend us. But from the low and filthy habits of the creature which our Lord

chooseth in this similitude—and among the Jews it was lower still, being among the creatures which were held unclean—we may infer that He includeth thereby only the very basest and most abandoned of the people, who for their great sins are thus cut off by a just retribution from the offer of Christian pearls, which are offered to all besides.

Now, if instead of such a generous communication of those riches of grace and treasures of spiritual knowledge which the Lord hath bestowed upon us, we allow a natural love for seclusion to withdraw us from the power of holding intercourse with our fellows ; or if, holding intercourse with them, we allow self-sufficiency and spiritual pride to shut us up in the admiration of our religious peculiarities ; or if, from too great a straining after perfection, an ultra-puritanism, if I may so express it, we have a severe and pharisaical countenance towards the meaner attainments or humbler ambitions of those around us,—if by the operation of these or other causes our spirit separates from the communion of our Christian brother, and dwelleth apart in the enjoyment of its own experience, we never fail to be punished in that very spiritual part which hath offended, by contracting some spiritual diseases, and exhibiting some fantastical or spurious forms of the Christian character.

Such religious recluses, thus withheld from the communion of their brethren, do often bend their minds to the contemplation of the works and ways of God, and by reason of the solitary cheerlessness in which they dwell, their contemplations are generally clouded with gloom, and their reflections shaded with melancholy. By the same infirmity of nature which parted them from their kind, they seize upon the darkest passages of the Lord's providence, and perplex themselves with fears and apprehensions of their own estate. Their walks are full of meditation, and pensive thought sits upon their pale faces ; they go forth in the twilight, and wander in darkness. And if the enemy catcheth them at disadvantage, and suggesteth to them horrid thoughts, which lie brooding, uncommunicated, undispelled, waiting melancholy moods and sad occasions,—which occurring, I have known them, yes, men otherwise most devout, who permitted themselves in

this unnatural abstraction, so far left to themselves as to lift their hand against their own lives, and perpetrate the deed of self-murder. Of this disease, though by the mercy of God defended against its fatal issue, was our gifted countryman Cowper a melancholy instance, whose whole life was clouded by that bashfulness which, far from yielding to, he ought to have cast all his strength and graces against. And not only was the serenity of his most inoffensive life beclouded by this fatal disease, but all his writings have a tinge of it. For the lyre which he touched was, to use his figure, his own over-sensitive heart. The cure of this disease is kindly and frequent communication of our feelings, which drains off the poisonous exhalations as they arise, and in the end exhausts the ground of bitterness from which they come. If by a friend the most arduous and desolate journey is beguiled—if our home, though upon the rough and solitary and stormy sea-beach, is endeared by the objects of affection which dwell therein—if all enjoyment is doubled by the participation of a friend, and by his strengthening presence adversity is defrauded of more than half its grief,—why not likewise may the dark contemplations of religion, its gloomy prospects, and its unfathomable mysteries, be cheated of their painful effects by the frequent converse and communion of those who have experienced and overcome them?

Another form of this spiritual disease is when the mind, hindered of its spiritual outlet, turns inwards upon itself. This self-examination, which, if prosecuted in the spirit of Christian charity, and with due allowance for the frailties of our nature, issues in humility and amendment, when prosecuted in the severe spirit of seclusion hath commonly issued in mortification and self-inflicted punishment. Often have I witnessed such self-accusing and self-tormenting Christians, into whose gloomy fears and distrusts when you inquired, you can find no reasonable cause for them, except the seclusion in which they keep their minds. These are the misanthropes of religion, who will not be comforted, but delight in the gloomiest conceptions of themselves, and the saddest pictures of humanity in general. Out of this cometh all the rites of monachism, which is an institution formed on purpose

for generating and fostering this abstraction from the holy charities of the family, and the sweet communings of friendship. Narrow cells, sepulchral glooms, and horrid shades, produce the disease, and bring it to perfection; while self-denial, and self-mortification, and confession, and penance, follow as the natural effects rather than a part of such a system. Human-heartedness dies, the charities of the gospel are made of none effect. God becomes the inquisitor-general of the earth, and the human race miserable slaves of their own self-torturing souls. In its most favourable aspect, this solitary self-searching casts a deep shadow over our religion, even where it doth not disturb it, as may be seen beautifully illustrated in the work of Thomas à Kempis upon the "Imitation of Christ," one of the ablest works upon subjective Christianity—that is, as it affects one's self—but never failing to cast the mind under shade, unless it be relieved by an active exercise of objective Christianity—that is, as it bears upon those around us.

There is a third form of this disease, where the exclusionist cometh abroad to take a part in human affairs; and in this case it hardly ever fails to work wretchedness and woe upon those over whom it hath the power. He is zealous for the smallest forms, and has no respect for the conscience of others, which he would offend in the highest matters, and consign to condign punishment rather than relax the smallest portion of his prejudices. And why? not because he was cruel to them in particular—he would have been equally cruel to himself—but he had not learned by intercourse with men to distinguish the proper value of forms and ceremonies in the sanctification of the soul, and thought them essential to salvation, and thus did his intolerance greatly help to cast this country into a flame. This form of the disease extending to sects, produces those jealousies, and enmities, and bickerings for power, which have degraded the history of the Church, and have reaped to themselves from the God of charity a barrenness of Christian graces, and a plentiful harvest of the proud and ambitious tempers of the world. If, for example, proud of the simple forms under which our fathers have been trained to heaven, and shutting my eye to the august and imposing

forms of other lands, I were to condemn them with a sweeping accusation, and endeavour to inoculate you with a similar spirit, I should wear this form of the disease. Or if, because our creed is Calvinistic, and ascendeth into the high region of that mystery, taking care all the while to secure the lower region of a sinner's free acceptance in Christ, and justification through faith, and sanctification through the Spirit, and personal holiness—I were to cast off all those who, not venturing so high into the mystery, do yet preserve the lower practical regions with equal sacredness; or if, because of our higher aspirations, those who are content with lower flights do cast us Calvinists off, calling us antinomians, and worse than atheists,—then are we both labouring under this disease, and to be cured, need only to be brought into converse and communion with each other.

Again, this recluseness of the spiritual man often runneth into the visionary form. Into this last form of the disease fell that soul of every excellence, the glorious Milton, who so dwelt in the ethereal regions of his poetry, and the empyrean of his refined religion, that all his busy life, in the most temper-trying and frailty-revealing times, he could not learn to accommodate his ideas to the existing forms of man so as to worship with him. He saw illiberality in one class, and ignorance in another; he was disgusted with the pride and irreligion of a third, and with the intolerance and worldliness of all. And so he fell into the greatest of all intolerance, and for the latter years of his life dwelt apart within the temple of his own pious soul.

"His soul was like a star, and dwelt apart."

Thus doth the Almighty, in various ways, punish the soul of man for contracting its sympathies, and shutting up its bowels of compassion to its kind. For as He, the possessor of all good, is likewise the author of all good; He, the sole inhabitant of eternity, is the Father of all who dwell within the bounds of time.

Therefore, brethren, I exhort as many of you as the Lord our God hath called with a holy calling, to hold intercourse with each other on all religious points in which you can con-

scientiously agree; and these are far more numerous than those in which you differ. For I hold that this same recluseness of the soul, when it exerciseth not itself with the sad contemplation of the outer world, nor with the severe inspection of its own self, but cometh abroad to take a part in human affairs, hath always wrought wretchedness and woe. Being shut within its own sanctuary, and brooding over its own thoughts and designs, taking little or no counsel of others, it worketh according to its own particular prejudices, rather than for the commonweal. And being conscious of honest intentions, and fully persuaded in his own mind, the spiritual bigot, whom power hath lifted up, becomes a spiritual oppressor. Conscience armeth him against the consciences of others; he hath not known his own imperfections by bearing the contradictions of others; he hath not been taught to distrust himself by submitting to the schooling of opposite opinions. He thinks he alone is right, that God favoureth the right; and so adding trust in God to natural foolhardiness, he rusheth like a horse into the battle, and generally mangleth himself amongst the resisting weapons of men. So reigned, and so fell, one of the most injurious, and yet, so far as man can judge, one of the most pious, primates of England. Again, this recluseness of the spiritual man often runneth, as in the case of the glorious poet alluded to above, into an excessive puritanism too high for this earth. When the poet meets with the Christian, and the practical philanthropist combineth not with both to hold them in check, the result of the combination is to beget an over-refined life of the soul, which I might call its prophetic life. It surveys the possibilities, not the realities of things. And perceiving the glad consummation to which God is conducting all things, it vaults the intervening space, and devours the long interval necessary to the accomplishment of the vision; by help of imagination, bodies it forth; by hope possesseth it and enjoys it, and in these enjoyments the prophetic Christian lives. And these inhabiting his better being, having his citizenship in times long distant, and his tempers set thereto, when he cometh into actual contact with men, he is wounded and irritated on all sides; he complains and quarrels with the actual state of

things, and being too far gone in the ethereal disease, he withdraws to his closet, and sings his royal fancies, laments that he hath fallen on evil days and evil tongues, calls for hearers fit though few, wonders if there be faith still left upon the earth, and, like Elijah, complaineth that he is left alone, when there may be thousands of true men known to God's more charitable eye. Which condition of the recluse soul I do rather pity than blame, for to himself alone is he harmful—to posterity one such enthusiast, one such Christian hero, is often more profitable than perhaps a thousand of those more practical believers who have not bowed the knee to Baal, neither worshipped the images which are set up to him. Four forms of the recluse Christian spirit—the contemplative, the ascetic, the despotic, and the visionary—every one of us will necessarily fall under, unless, while we grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we do also communicate freely with one another that light and spiritual understanding which is freely given unto us.

The rule which, following myself, I recommend to each one of you, is to hold intercourse of speech and communion of soul with every Christian with whom you meet, upon those things wherein you can honestly agree. Discourse of the Christian temper, which all believe consisteth in meekness, gentleness, and love; discourse of the Christian life, which all consider includeth good morals, agreeable manners, an upright and honourable spirit; discourse of the wisdom of God's creation, and the bountifulness of His providence, and the exceeding greatness of His promises towards those who believe Confess to each other your imperfections, and open up, according to your knowledge, how these may best be removed; and though you cannot agree upon the exact measure of your Lord's dignity, or the exact end of His coming, certainly you can admire and praise Him, so far as you are agreed; and where you differ, if you cannot agree to differ, you can be silent. The good breeding of the world requires as much; and, sure, Christian charity will not yield the palm of patience and forbearance to the spirit of the world! So you can have infinite compass of sweet and improving discourse; and if you wish to act together, there are regions unbounded. You

can agree to disseminate the Scriptures, which is your common faith; to dispel ignorance, which is your common enemy; to limit the reigning of power; to build up the tabernacle of peace in the midst of us; to succour the distressed, and recover the fallen; to save penitents, and pluck the wicked as brands from the burning; to confirm the doubting, and to stay the march of unbelief; and to do works of mercy and loving-kindness towards all who need your help.

By these and other forms of intercourse, I do not say that you will bring yourselves to think alike upon every subject, which, were it possible, is hardly desirable; for here the force of truth upon the earth, like the forces of the material world, consisteth in the balance of opposite powers; and the motion of truth, like the motions of the heavens, is produced by the adjustment of opposite forces;—but though you will not come into complete harmony of the intellect, which is reserved for heaven, where we shall know even as we are known, you will remove many discords from the feelings of the heart, and by keeping in concert where you are really in unison, you will come into unison in things where you were formerly discordant. The errors of each other, which distance always magnifies in good people, and hides only in bad, will cease to appear of such magnitude or amount; and the truth, which, in an honest, well-meaning man—and still more in a sincere Christian—greatly overbalanceth the error, will manifest itself to be far greater than we could have believed; and the soul, by living in sweet sympathy, which is the milk of its existence, will become strong to cast off its own desires, and active to hold intercourse with men of various tempers and opinions. It will also become conscious of its own imperfections, and thus tolerant to those of others, and grow in that charity which thinketh no evil, which hopeth all things, which believeth all things, and which rejoiceth evermore in the good which it discovereth in all things.

The man does not exist, in a civilised community, with whom any other man hath not more in common than he hath in opposition: the laws of their physical being are the same; they are subject to the same wants, the same adversities, the

same diseases, the same death; all which are to be met with the same medicines, and overcome in the same strength. And the laws of their moral being are likewise the same by nature, and, if developed by the same religion, are still more harmonious; and, though developed by conditions the most adverse, do still agree in more respects than they discord, —having the same desires, admiring the same characters of excellence, pursuing the same good conditions, fearing the same catastrophes of crime and guilt, hoping the same deliverances, and rejoicing in the same joyful issues. And even their acquired knowledge agrees far oftener than it differs. We believe the same histories, the same sciences, so far as we know; the same causes and effects; and in opinion we agree far oftener than we differ. Were it not that men more generally sympathise than disagree, what legislature could devise for them laws,—what book could give them instruction,—what speaker could please them,—what oratory hold them mute, —what persuasion unite them? The whole framework of civil and political society is the proof and manifestation of that which I affirm. But likewise it is the proof and manifestation of another property of human nature,—its tendency to fly away from the region of its sympathies into the region of its antipathies; to counteract which evil tendency, these laws are fain to be defended with terrors; the region of agreement hath, as it were, to be barricaded, and the outward region of disagreement to be planted with manifold obstructions, threatenings, and losses. So our blessed religion, knowing the same tendency of human nature to flee off into the region of its antipathies and dislikes, hath given forth the royal law of love, which is embodied through the whole system of divine truth. It was founded in love from all eternity—God's love to a fallen world; in the fulness of time it was manifested in love—Christ's love to the rebellious children of men; and now it standeth in love—the supreme love of our hearts to God, and love to our neighbour equal with that unto ourselves; and it will end in joyful love—the love of the redeemed in heaven through all eternity. While law, therefore, hindereth quarrel and discord, promoting as far as it can social and friendly union, religion, with all its mighty power,

sustaineth law, and passeth far beyond it in the same good and benevolent direction. But so strong is this tendency of human nature to harp upon the one discord rather than enjoy the ninety and nine harmonies, that, while the principles of society doth not hinder those political parties and private quarrels, which are ever crowding our courts for adjustment, so the charitable spirit of religion doth not hinder most unseemly divisions amongst the members of Christ.

Shame upon Christians for their discords and their distrusts! They are more like jealous competitors for a petty place than the living members of Christ. They have no hand for welcoming, no heart for blessing a brother, unless he belong to their sect. They misjudge him, they asperse him unjustly, they think evil of him. Shame upon them for their disloyalty to the Spirit of Christ, which is love! They dwell in their little fraternities; or if they come forth, it is as spies upon each other; they gather up the vilest garbage of public slander, they love it, and nourish by recounting it their spleen and their uncharitableness. Shame upon them for such an unchristian temper! This cometh of their separations; they roost together in a certain twilight of Christian knowledge; they teach their eyes to love the gloom, which cometh to dislike the glorious light of day; they keep within their narrow lines, and can bear no speculation; and if aught they hear beyond these, they tremble in their hiding-places, and go not forth to discover whether it is the coming of friend or foe,—if of friend, to welcome him—if of foe, in the strength of the Lord to withstand him. There they lie smothered and inert, and rest upon the providence of God.

And is this the spirit of Christ, who came forth in loving-kindness to the chief of sinners? and is this the spirit of the apostles, who went from barbarous clime to more barbarous clime in the strength of their universal commission, to every creature under heaven? And oh, I ask, is this the Christian spirit which Paul taught to his son Timothy, when he said, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind?" Where is their power, if they timorously seek the twilight and the night, and, like men walking in darkness, dread the sound of every voice, and

tremble at the approach of every footstep? Where is their love, depreciated and broken down into rival factions, of which one speaketh a good word of another only in compliment and by sufferance of their natural disposition, which is rather to point out faults and speak dislike? Where is their soundness of mind, that they have not discovered in how much more they agree together and differ from the world, than they differ amongst each other? Yet for all the ninety and nine points in which we agree, such is the divided condition of the religious world, that experience, sad and painful experience, hath taught me to expect, if not all, almost all, my sympathy from the honourable of this world, and little—alas, how little!—from the members of Christ.

This artificial condition of things ariseth from their knowing each other only by their distinctions, and being classed and named by these distinctions. Still, though differently named, they are brothers in Christ. And as brothers, notwithstanding their different names, and even notwithstanding their complexional differences of character and temper, dwell together in unity, because they have common parents, a common home, a common inheritance, and feel a common blood circulating around their heart; so ought the separate individuals of the body of Christ to regard each other in love, and speak of each other with amiable temper, and dwell together in harmony, not unvaried with occasional free discourse and good-natured agitation of their opinions, because they have a common Father, even the God and Father of all,—a common Saviour, the Head of all,—a common speech, the soul of all,—and dwell under the pleasant canopy of a common tabernacle, the Church of the living God,—and fare onward towards a common inheritance, the land of promise beyond the river of death.

These strictures, brethren, which I freely make amongst you, and could hardly make elsewhere, are intended to guard you against living overmuch in the narrowness of your own prejudices, or within the margin each of your own sanctified opinions, and to encourage you to mutual intercourse and communion, that the rust of your prejudices may be worn off and you may be made more serviceable to the cause of your

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is not content with wishing that a part of men, but that all men should come unto Him and have life. Therefore be humble in the spirit of your minds, each one thinking of another more highly than of himself. Let the elder be serviceable to the younger; even as the Lord washed the feet of His disciples, so minister the one to the other. Be not slack to open up your hearts to the brethren, that ye may know and profit by each other's experience. Be more willing to listen than to speak, more disposed to harmony than to discord; as brethren, loving one another, and keeping the unity of the faith in the bond of peace.

It remaineth, therefore, as the conclusion of the whole matter, that where personal religion is present social religion cannot be absent. And it may easily be inferred negatively, that where personal religion is not present, social religion truly so called cannot be present. So that whoever would worship God in families, or in the congregation, or have wherewithal to hold social converse with his friends and acquaintance upon things spiritual and divine, must begin the work upon himself, and lay in stores of personal experience and of personal piety, and be built up in his whole mind after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness. Therefore, as the improvement of what hath been said, let me exhort every one to the cultivation within himself of religious knowledge and religious feeling, not only as the means to the end for which we assemble here and elsewhere, but for the greater end of your present welfare and everlasting salvation.

DISCOURSES DELIVERED ON PUBLIC OCCASIONS.

DISCOURSES DELIVERED ON PUBLIC OCCASIONS.

I.

FAREWELL DISCOURSE AT ST JOHN'S, GLASGOW.*

2 Cor. xiii. 11.

Finally, brethren, farewell.

WHEN friends part, they part in peace, making mention of the kind passages which have occurred between them, and giving assurance of the good-will and tender attachment which these passages of kindness have wrought within their hearts. At such a time, to remember aught but affection, or to utter aught but blessing, were an indecency to revolt the common heart of nature, and draw down the visitation of God. For it is the ordinance of nature and religion both that friends should part in peace,—nature, conscious of her weakness, whispers with a still, small voice, "Ye may never meet again; ye may have no other opportunity to testify your attachment: therefore, lose not this—entertain your friend's last interview with your choicest and richest mood, send him on his way in peace, and speak into his ear words of comfort and encouragement;" while to the departing sojourner she saith, "Receive with affection, and treasure up these tokens of love—these blessings and benedictions prize, and bear along with you like parting legacies,

* Preached in 1822, on Mr Irving's leaving the church in which he had been associated as colleague with Dr Chalmers; to whom this discourse, on its first publication, was dedicated.

they are your best credentials wherever you go; and though unwritten, unsealed, and uttered in no ear but your own, and transient as a voice, yet coming from the heart, which God beholds, and bringing forth heartfelt desires of good, which God delights in, they will draw down from Him, if aught will, favour and protection upon the path in which you are to go." To which soft suggestions of nature, religion adds her authoritative voice, and commands, "Ye are brethren of one blood, whithersoever ye sojourn: part, therefore, with the tender embrace of brethren; ye have gone up to the house of God together, there worshipped, there vowed, there taken counsel together; part then as the redeemed of the Lord. Have ye not broken of the same bread of blessing, and drunk from the same cup of blessing, and supped around the holy table of Christ? therefore, part as the sworn brothers of Christ. What though differences may have arisen, and injuries ensued thereon, this may be the last opportunity for forgiveness; seize it, therefore, before broad lands or wide seas intervene between you; forget and forgive, and part in peace, that when you come to the altar, and present unto the Lord your gift, there may be naught between you and your brother to prevent it from being accepted." Thus nature and religion meet hand in hand to sweeten and hallow the parting scene of friends, and to clothe its naked grief with decent expressions of kindness and love, and to suppress its sighs and tears with the voice of blessing, and the promise of a welcome meeting again, either here or hereafter.

Need we mention to confirm this, the solemn touches of nature in the partings of the patriarchs from their children and from one another; Naomi's pathetic parting from her daughter-in-law, which to Ruth was more heart-rending than to leave country and kindred and all; David's parting from Jonathan his brother, sealed with a covenant of affection true till death, and when by death's fell touch divided, mourned over with the tenderest of elegies. Need we speak of Christ's farewell to that execrable city, whose murders of the prophets, and impending murder of Himself, did not hold Him again that He should not pour over it a farewell of parental tenderness and deep commiseration: or, His long farewell

of comfort to His disciples, wherein His heart bursts with utterances of peace, consolation, and joy; with promises of a Comforter evermore to dwell within their breast, and of mansions in His Father's house, to be by Himself made ready against their coming, all sanctified by mysterious and earnest intercessions with His heavenly Father for their sakes. Or need we speak of His servants the apostles, how they comforted the brethren in every city, before they departed, and how the brethren at their parting hung around their neck; how, in the hours devoted to recreation and rest, they came together and heard Paul prolong his discourse till midnight; how they bore him company to the solitary shore of the sea, and there mingled the voice of their prayer and weeping with the hoarse voice of the ocean; how they brought him on his ways, took measures for his safety, and commended him from city to city, and by every means made manifest, and concealed not the tender and pathetic emotions which they felt at parting.

Being reassured by these authorities of nature and revelation, that when there exist feelings of gratitude and affection towards the people of his charge, and longing desires after their present and everlasting welfare, the pastor is doing both a manly and a Christian part to bring these feelings forth, and to seal with the strong impression of love, all the passages of love which have occurred between him and his flock; we are resolved to depart from the approved custom of preaching upon some useful topic, which might be forced, in a short application, to bear upon the occasion of our parting, and to address ourselves to this painful work, as our Lord did on parting from His disciples, and Paul on parting from the elders of the Ephesian Church, with a full and constant allusion to the matters in hand. We would rather be absolved from the utterance of feelings which concern ourselves, and which are hardly to be uttered without egotism, or listened to without the sense of intrusion. Our heart calls for a voice to speak its fulness; but the fear of giving offence to ceremony and taste would restrain it. We must cast ourselves upon your indulgence, beloved brethren, as we have often done, praying you, if we seem to be foolish, to bear a

little with our folly, while we let nature speak, casting away from us fear of failure, and fear of offence, and fear of criticism, and every selfish consideration whatever.

This station, which brought us into the ministry of a people wont to listen to the most eloquent of men, we entered upon with a single trust in the providence and grace of God, rather rejoicing in the mighty champion by whose side we were to lift our arm, than mindful of the humiliating contrasts to which we would stand exposed. It is the nature of trust in God to abolish every other reliance, and render the soul careless to the issues of fortune, or fame, or worldly favour. So at least it fared with us when we first offered ourselves to this people. Consequences were disregarded; we stipulated for no conditions, being content with the portion that was offered to us. Like St Paul among the Corinthians, we brought no introductions, and adopted no arts of address or insinuation, but gave ourselves with a light and cheerful heart to the manifold duties of this congregation and parish. The cabins of the poor and the workshops of the mechanic we have made our resort, rather than the ambitious steps of power, or the sly and crooked approaches of influence. And that alone which we coveted after, God hath given us, the hearts and blessings of the poor, the favour and friendship of many Christians in higher conditions, and the undeserved approbation of your pastor, under whom we laboured.

These simple truths we mention, not out of self-love or vanity, but out of piety and gratitude to Him in whom we trusted, and who hath not suffered His servant to be put to shame. It is the burden of our acknowledgments to God we offer up, not any achievements of our own we boast of. He knows, and He alone doth know, how unworthy we are of the meanest of those favours whereof it hath pleased Him to grant us many. But we will not be silent in this congregation of His people, to meditate and speak His praise, and make mention of His loving-kindness to the most unworthy of His ministering servants. Neither formality, nor the breeding to which even this chair of God must conform, nor the fear of a critical generation, shall hinder us from weaving, like king David and the apostle Paul, out of our own per-

sonal history, a song unto Jehovah, and singing it aloud before all His people.

He is the best of patrons, He who casteth down the proud and exalteth those of low degree. He is the best of friends, He who hath the hearts of men in His hands, and turneth them at His pleasure. He is the best of masters, He who doth not chide nor keep anger still, but waiteth to be gracious, and sendeth down every good and every perfect gift. Ye people, put your trust in Him continually. The strong man shall become as flax, and the mighty man as the clod of the valley; and friends shall be comfortless or fade from your sight; the strength of youth and the joy of life shall utterly fail, and the bonds of nature may dissolve, so that parents shall forget, and the mother cease to love the child whom she bore;—but God, if ye trust in Him, shall be to you a shield and a buckler, and a strong tower and an everlasting portion. He shall feed you by the still waters, and anoint your head with oil, and make your cup to overflow. He who made Abraham a great nation, and brought His servant David from feeding the ewes great with young, to feed His people Israel, He is still powerful to constrain principalities and powers, and to make for His people a name upon the earth, and a secure habitation to dwell in. Therefore, let all the people trust in the right hand of the Most High. Especially let the young men, in the season of their youth, when they begin to venture upon life, inexperienced and headstrong, their path unknown, their name and fortune in the hidden womb of the future—then, when a thousand cloudy uncertainties overhang them, and a thousand solicitations perplex them in their path, let them cease from the flattery of the great, and the cozenage of the wealthy, and be ashamed of sinister policy and all impure arts of aggrandisement. Let them stand by stern honesty, and walk in the ways of the Lord, which are truth, industry, and religion; then shall their mountain stand strong, and their horn be exalted; yea, the Lord shall make His name glorious by their exceeding exaltation. And most especially let the youth destined for the holy ministry stand aloof from the unholy influences under which the Church hath fallen; from the seats of power and patronage let them stand

aloof; from the boards of ecclesiastical intrigue on both sides of the Church, let them stand aloof; from glozing the public ear, and pampering the popular taste, with unprofitable though acceptable matter, let them stand aloof; and while thus dissevered from fawning, intriguing and pandering, let them draw near to God, and drink inspiration from the milk of His word; and though poor as the first disciples of Christ, without staff, without scrip, still, like the first disciples of Christ, let them labour in the ministry of the word and in prayer with their families, their kindred, their neighbourhood, the poor who will welcome them, the sick who desire them, and the young who need them,—then their Master will find them field enough of usefulness, though the Church should deride such puritan youth; and the providence of God will find them in food and raiment, though no patron's eye may deign a look to such friendless youth; and the paradise of God will find them an eternal reward, though the world should cast forth from its fortunate places such heavenly-minded youth. Such a seed would make the Church once more to be glorious. One such youth trained amidst nature's extremities, and hope's obdurate fastnesses—his soul fed not on patron's hopes nor favour's smiles, but upon the stern resolves, and heavenward enjoyments of an apostle's toilsome calling—that youth, I say, were worth a hundred, and a hundred such were worth a host, to revive and quicken this our land—the land, the only land, of a free plebeian church, which never pined till she began to be patronised.

These humble acknowledgments to our Father in heaven are well due from a heart which He hath purchased to Himself with His many benefits, which hath ill acknowledged His sovereignty, and now but feebly expresseth the obligations which it feels. But, however feeble the expressions, they are His by right who hath brought us through the perilous days of youth, not visiting our many transgressions with stripes, who hath prospered us beyond our deserving in His Church, and put to flight the foreboding fears which a mind, ill-attuned to the present economy of the Church, conjured up in our path. He hath taken us from the sight of much in

our Church that wounded a zealous spirit, but which neither zeal nor wisdom seem able to amend, away to the observation and fellowship of men, who are sustaining the interests of religion at home and abroad—to the bosom of a city which is the Mount Zion of the Christian world, whence the law and the testimony are going forth to the ends of the earth. May that abundant mercy which hath done so much, even for the most undeserving, take in good part these our utterances of gratitude and praise, and enable us to testify, in the bosom of that activity to which He hath called us, how zealous we are over the people of His hand, and how indefatigable in the strife which His servants are there waging against the darkness of the world.

Our soul being discharged of the sentiment of devotion, which above all others moves us, on the eve of stepping from a lower to a higher station in the Church of the living God, we are now at ease for the utterance of all we feel towards this congregation and parish, of which we are taking leave.

For the congregation, it is almost the first in which our preaching was tolerated, and therefore whatever name we may acquire, and whatever good our ministerial labours may turn to, we give to your indulgence of our early and most imperfect endeavours. Take not these for words of compliment to you, as if you had found in us anything worth while; nor for words of congratulation to ourselves, as if you had awarded us any honour. We know, upon the other hand, that our imperfections have not been hid from your eyes, and that they have alienated some from our ministry. But still it is our joy and reward, that so many have given us a patient and willing ear—an honour, we say again, to which we were not wont, till providence cast our footsteps hitherward. Of this superior acceptance we would have given the credit to alteration or improvement in our view of doctrine, if we had any such to boast of, but, being conscious of no such thing, we leave the credit in the hands of your indulgence, and regard as our patrons under God, this intelligent and independent congregation of citizens. Whatever advances we have made, or are to make in this world's favour, let them rest where they are due, with that phalanx of friendly

men, who thought us worthy of their attendance and approbation.

There is a tide in public favour, which some ride on prosperously, which others work against and weather amain. Those who take it fair at the outset, and will have the patience to observe its veerings, and to shift and hold their course accordingly, shall fetch their port with prosperous and easy sail; those again, who are careless of ease, and court danger in a noble cause, confiding also in their patient endurance, and the protection of Heaven, launch fearlessly into the wide and open deep, resolved to explore all they can reach, and to benefit all they explore, shall chance to have hard encounters, and reach safely through perils and dangers. But while they risk much, they discover much; they come to know the extremities of fate, and grow familiar with the gracious interpositions of Heaven. So it is with the preachers of the gospel. Some are traders from port to port, following the customary and approved course; others adventure over the whole ocean of human concerns: the former are hailed by the common voice of the multitude, whose course they hold; the latter blamed as idle, often suspected of hiding deep designs, always derided as having lost all guess of the proper course. Yet of the latter class of preachers was Paul the apostle, who took lessons of none of his brethren when he went up to Jerusalem; of the same class was Luther the reformer, who asked counsel of nothing but his Bible, and addressed him single-handed to all the exigents of his time; of the same class was Calvin, the most lion-hearted of churchmen, whose independent thinking hath made him a name to live, and hath given birth to valuable systems both of doctrine and polity. Therefore, such adventurers, with the Bible as their chart, and the necessities of their age as the ocean to be explored, and brought under authority of Christ, are not to be despised, because they are single-handed and solitary, by the multitude of useful men, who wait upon those portions which some former adventures have already brought into the vineyard. And long let this audience, which listens to the voice of a pastor, who, without sacrificing the gospel of Christ, hath diverged further than any of his age from the approved

course of preaching, and launched a bold adventure of his own into the ocean of religious speculation, bringing off prouder triumphs to his Redeemer than any ancient pilot of them all—long may this the people of his pasture, give countenance to those in whom they discern a spirit from the Lord, and a zeal for His honour, however much they may hold of ancient and venerable landmarks, which, though they might well define the course proper to a former generation, may be quite unsuitable to the necessities of the present. Such adventurers, under God, this age of the world seems to us especially to want. There are ministers enow to hold the flock in pasture and in safety. But where are they to make inroad upon the alien, to bring in the votaries of fashion, of literature, of sentiment, of policy, and of rank, who are content in their several idolatries to do without piety to God, and love to Him whom He hath sent? Where are they to lift up their voice against simony, and arts of policy, and servile dependence upon the great ones of this earth, and shameful seeking of ease and pleasure, and anxious amassing of money, and the whole cohort of evil customs which are overspreading the ministers of the Church? Truly, it is not stagers who take on the customary form of their office, and go the beaten round of duty, and then lie down content; but it is daring adventurers, who shall eye from the proud eminence of a holy and heavenly mind, all the grievances which religion underlays, and all the obstacles which stay her course, and then descend, with the self-denial and the faith of an apostle, to set the battle in array against them all.

Fear not, brethren, that many will be so bold, or that the body of good custom will break up, and give place to wild rovings and huntings after novelty. Against this you are secured by the strongest desire of the youthful mind, the desire of pleasing the greater number, by the rewards which lie all upon the side of conformity, and by the risk and ridicule which lie all upon the side of adventure. The danger is of too much sameness of the style and method, not of too little. The multitude of preachers will plod the beaten track, and weary you with the same succession of objects and views, constantly presenting the same aspect of things to the same

faculties of the mind, and if you would have the relief of freshness and novelty, no less necessary for the entertainment of the spiritual than of the natural eye—if you would have religion made as broad as thought and experience, then you must not discourage, but bear patiently with, and hear to an end, any one who takes his natural liberty to expatiate over all the applications of the Word of God to the wants of men, bringing him to no bar of favourite preachers, but to the bar of your own religious feelings and experience alone.

Thus we plead and exhort, not in defence of ourselves, though it is well known to you we have taken such freedom, but in behalf of our brotherhood, and of the ancient liberty of prophesying, against those narrow prescriptive tastes, bred not of knowledge, nor derived from the better days of the Church, but in the conventicle bred; and fitted, perhaps, for keeping together a school of Christians, but totally unfit for the wide necessities of the world—(else why this alienation of the influential of the world from the cause?)—we are pleading against those Shibboleths of a sect, those forms of words which now do not feed the soul with understanding, but are in truth as the time-worn and bare trunks of those trees from which the Church was formerly nourished, and which now have in them neither sap nor nourishment. We are pleading for a more natural style of preaching, in which the various moral and religious wants of men shall be met, artlessly met with the simple truths of revelation, delivered as ultimate facts, not to be reasoned on, and expressed as Scripture expresses them—which conjunction being made, and crowned with prayer for the Divine blessing, the preacher has fulfilled the true spirit of his office.

This certainly is what we have aimed at. It hath led us to be suspected, it hath led us to be blamed, it hath led us to be stigmatised, by the timorous slaves of customary men and customary preaching; but ye, nevertheless, have borne with us, for which we now render you our hearty thanks. Ye have borne the free utterance of all our thoughts, upon all subjects that came under our ministration, thereby affording us the highest treat of a thinking, and the dearest right of a conscientious man. Ye have seen the inmost foldings of our hearts,

for nothing have we disguised, and little reserved,—all which ye have taken in good part. Ye have given us liberty, and we have taken it, yet hath there been no quarrel between us. The Lord reward you for your kindness. Ye have advanced us from the condition of an unknown stranger to be your guest, your friend, your confidant in things spiritual and temporal. Kindly counsel ye have given us often—harsh rebukes never. An unfriendly word hath not passed between us and any mortal of the hundreds now before us. We have not one known enemy in a congregation from which we have gathered a large accession to our friends.

May the Lord, who heard the prayer of Solomon and Daniel for the congregation of Israel, hear our prayer for this congregation of His people—that they may long assemble in peace within these sacred walls to enter into fellowship with the Father of their spirits, and drink edification from the lips of priests gifted with the Spirit of God, and strong in the discipline of Christ—that they may be defended by God's providence from want, and by His grace saved from falling, —that they may live united together in the bonds of their Saviour's love, and be sustained by the hope of His calling under the trials and afflictions of this sinful estate—that, full of years and good fruits, they may be gathered to their fathers, and leave of their loins a seed to serve the Lord while sun and moon endure.

This place has been the cradle of my clerical character, whatever it may become—this congregation its nurse and fostering mother, God above all being its protector. Your indulgence has restored me to the confidence of myself, which had begun to fail, under the unsanctioning coldness of the priesthood, restored me to the Church from which despair of being serviceable had well-nigh weaned me, and restored my affection to this holy vocation, which I shall labour to fulfil, and by God's grace to magnify. Take, then, my acknowledgments in good part, they are all I have to offer, and they are well deserved by men whose good and honourable report hath borne down the misjudgments with which my opening ministry was assailed.

But, in a still dearer sense, we stand related to the people

of the parish than to the congregation, inasmuch as the indulgence of nature's affections is dearer than to discharge the duties of the highest office, or to inherit the honour of having discharged them well. Here, in the pulpit, we filled a station, and took upon us an official character, and played one part amongst the many which are played upon the stage of life. There in the parish we went forth in nature's liberty, consociating with the people as man doth with man, or friend with friend; a soother of distress, a brother of the youth, an encourager of the children, and often listener to the wisdom of the aged. We took no clerical state, assumed no superiority of learned, nor affectation of vulgar phrase, served ourselves with no imposing address; but in the freedom of natural feeling, and speaking from the fulness of the heart, we wandered from house to house, depending on the gainliness of genuine nature, and the patronage of Almighty God,—which two staffs, nature and God, have sustained our goings forth, and brought us with great delight through the thousands of families in this parish, and failed us never. Oh! how my heart rejoices to recur to the hours I have sitten under the roofs of the people, and been made a partaker of their confidence, and a witness of the hardships they had to endure. In the scantiest, and perhaps sorest time with which this manufacturing city hath been ever pressed, it was my almost daily habit to make a round of their families, and uphold what in me lay the declining cause of God. There have I sitten, with little silver or gold of my own to bestow, with little command over the charity of others, and heard the various narratives of hardship, narratives uttered for the most part with modesty and patience, oftener drawn forth with difficulty than obtruded on your ear,—their wants, their misfortunes, their ill-requited labour, their hopes vanishing, their families dispersing in search of better habitations, the Scottish economy of their homes giving way before encroaching necessity, debt rather than saving their condition, bread and water their scanty fare, hard and ungrateful labour the portion of their house,—all this have I often seen and listened to within naked walls, the witness, oft the partaker, of their miserable cheer, with little or no means to relieve. Yet be it known, to the glory of God,

and the credit of the poor, and the encouragement of tender-hearted Christians, that such application to the heart's ailments is there in our religion, and such a hold in its promises, and such a pith of endurance in its noble examples, that when set forth by our inexperienced tongue, with soft words and kindly tones, they did never fail to drain the heart of the sourness which calamity engenders, and sweeten it with the balm of resignation, often enlarge it with cheerful hope, sometimes swell it high with the rejoicings of a Christian triumph. The manly tear which I have seen start into the eye of many an aged sire, whose wrinkled brow and lyart locks deserved a better fate, as he looked to the fell conclusion of an ill-provided house, an ill-educated family, and a declining religion, which hemmed him in, at a time when his hand was growing feeble for work, and the twilight of age setting in upon his soul,—that tear is dearer to my remembrance than the tear of sentiment which the eye of beauty swims with at a tale of distress; yea, it is dear as the tear of liberty which the patriot sheds over his fallen country; and the blessings of the aged widow, bereft of the sight and stay of her children, and sitting in her lonely cabin the live-long day at her humble occupation—her blessings when my form, darkening her threshold, drew her eye—the story of her youth, of her family, and husband, wede away from her presence—her patient trust in God, and lively faith in Christ—with the deep response of her sighs when I besought God's blessing upon the widow's cruse, and the widow's barrel, and that He would be the husband of her widowhood, and the father of her children, in their several habitations,—these, so oft my engagement, shall be hallowed tokens for memory to flee to, and sacred materials for fancy to work with, while the heart doth beat within my breast. God above doth know my destiny; but though it were to minister in the halls of nobles, and the courts and palaces of kings, He can never find for me more natural welcome, more kindly entertainment, and more refined enjoyment than He hath honoured me with in this suburb parish of a manufacturing city. My theology was never in fault around the fires of the poor, my manner never misinterpreted, my good intentions never mistaken. Churchmen

and Dissenters, Catholics and Protestants, received me with equal graciousness. Here was the popularity worth the having —whose evidences are not in noise, ostentation, and numbers, but in the heart opened and disburdened, in the cordial welcome of your poorest exhortations, and the spirit moved by your most unworthy prayer, in the flowing tear, the confided secret, the parting grasp, and the long, long entreaty to return. Of this popularity I *am* covetous; and God in His goodness hath granted it in abundance, with which I desire to be content.

They who will visit the poor shall find the poor worthy to be visited,—they who will take an interest, not as patrons, but as fellow-men, in the condition of the poor, shall not only confer but inherit a blessing. 'Tis the finest office of religion, to visit the widows, and the fatherless, and those who have no helper,—so secret, so modest, so tender-hearted; most like it is to God's providence itself, so noiseless and unseen, and effectual. Communion of this private kind is likest prayer to Heaven; two spirits conferring, the one needing, the other having to give; no third party conscious, the want is made known, the known want is supplied, love and gratitude all the return. There needs no formality of speech, every word being addressed to a present feeling; there needs no parade of benevolence, every gift being offered to a pressing want. There needs no society, no committee, no subscription list, no memorial of any kind to make it known. Would that in this age, when our clergy and our laity are ever and anon assembling in public to take measures for the moral and religious welfare of men, they were found as diligently occupying this more retired, more scriptural, and more natural region! Would they were as instant for the poor, the irreligious, the unprotected of their several parishes, and several neighbourhoods, as they are for the tribes, whose dwellings are remote, and whose tongue is strange! Then would they find what we have found, and have oft averred in the teeth of prejudice and power, and are proud now in public to aver, that the poor and labouring classes of Scotland are Scotland's pride and glory still, as they were wont to be—the class they are out of which have sprung her noblest men, who have earned the far-famed honours of

her name in all foreign parts. They stand as superior to the peasantry of the modern world for knowledge, religion, and character, as in ancient times the Greeks did for arts, or the Romans for glorious arms. The peasantry of the country parts, and the unadulterated Scottish population of her towns, are not yet fallen from the places of their fathers; and if this mother Church, which has been to us in the place of all liberal institutions, and to which we are indebted, under God, for almost everything we have worth the having, almost as much indebted as was Israel to the law and the ephod—if she would again become the Church of the people, to whom, and not to rank, she is indebted for her being, and would study the real interests of the people, and gather them as the great Head of the Church would have gathered the people of Jerusalem, even as a hen doth her chickens under her wings, then the national character, whereof the root and branches are still in vigour, would cover itself with its ancient fruits of peace and godliness, and overpower that canker of disaffection and discontent, whereof through bad husbandry some signs have appeared of late.

Nevertheless, my brethren, though the Church may seem to have parted interests with the people, let me pray you to nourish and not to desert her. Remember how your fathers, the common people of a former age, loved her, and for her sake made want their portion, and the waste wilderness their abode, and arms their unwonted occupation. Remember how she sprung from their hearty love and embrace of God's Word, and their hatred of intermeddling men. They dressed her vineyard, and it became fruitful; they defended it, and it became strong and terrible, and it did yield them wine and milk, while the nations around fed on sourest grapes. Your civil rights she gave you, your education that lifts you to stations of confidence; your high standard of moral purity, whence come your temperance and sobriety; your taste for reading and knowledge, whence comes your adventure; and, lastly, your prudent and faithful character, which makes you welcome amongst the nations. But the people of this parish, whom I now address, I need not court by ancient recollections, but by present enjoyments, to the love and admiration

of our national Church. Theirs it is not to complain of glory departed, but to rejoice in glory returned to their borders. Theirs not to lament over the cure of their souls neglected, but to joy in the cure of their souls watched over with more than primitive diligence. For it hath been the lot of this parish, brethren, as you well know, to possess the voice of the most eloquent, and the assiduities of the most tender-hearted of Scottish pastors, who hath gathered around him a host of the most pious and devoted agents,—a college doubtless of the best men that it hath been our lot to find around any single cause. Go ye to the cathedrals of our sister Church, you shall find a bishop, a dean, store of stalled prebends, priests, singers, and officers of every name. There shall be all the state and dignity of office, and all the formalities of the various degrees of the priesthood; magnificent fabrics withal; infinite collections of books; unlimited convenience for every religious enterprise, and unbounded command of all the means. Inquire what is done by these dignitaries, with their splendid appointments. Prayers are said each morning to some half-dozen of attendants, anthems sung by trained singers, and cathedral service performed each Sabbath by well-robed priests. Ask for week-day work, for the feeding of the flock from house to house, for the comforting of the poor, for the visitation of the sick, for the superintendence and teaching of the children; all assiduous nourishment of the flock of Christ, and all apostolical earnestness with the enemies of Christ,—these are nowhere to be found. Come, then, to this parish; ye shall find no chapter-house of ancient furniture, nor lumber-rooms of undisturbed volumes, no array of priests, nor legal command over means or assistance. One priest to attend the cure of many thousands, with what voluntary help he can draw from the flock itself. Yet such is still the vigour of our religious institutions, when wrought with the spirit of Christ, and such the willingness and practical wisdom of our people, when properly called out, that our single priest hath been surrounded with pious, intelligent, and industrious men, unhired with money, unpaid with official honour, deriving nothing but trouble, and consuming nothing but their means, and their more precious

time; who do a Christian father's office to the children, a brother's office to the poor, a friendly office unto all,—stirring and stimulating the lethargic spirit of religion; forcing vice from its concealments, or overawing it with their observation; making the Sabbath orderly in the day season, and in the evening rejoicing every street with the voice of children hymning their Maker's praise. There is not a child who need be ignorant of its duties to God and man, for spiritual instruction comes beseeching to every door. There is not a misfortune which may not find the voice of a comforter, nor a case of real want which doth not find a seasonable relief; nor a perplexity which may not be met with religious counsel. These things are not to seek, they are ready at hand, and served not out of constraint, but out of a willing mind. And while nature's ailments are thus healed by ministering hands, and the poor of God's house fed in time of need, the spirit is not debased by a sense of dependence, nor broken by insolence of office. There are no official visits of inquisition, nor speeches of harsh authority. Everything cometh forth of Christian willingness, and is tender as nature's feelings, and soft as the administration of mercy, which droppeth unseen upon the pining spirit, like the dew from heaven upon the parched earth. Such another institution as this parish hath for raising the tone of virtue and religion among you, I am bold to say, the Church, perhaps the world, doth not contain.

Bless the day when the Lord sent amongst you, from the sequestered valleys of his native county, His ministering servant, to work out for you the wondrous devices of his enlarged and simple mind. Bless the Lord, who hath given him strength and encouragement to carry through his schemes, and hath found him chosen men, men of knowledge and understanding, and the fear of God, to stand by him, and aid him in all his undertakings. I have been three years the observer, and, to my ability, the abettor of their schemes, but no party nor principal in any of them, only an humble minister; therefore I violate not modesty while I do them justice, and declare, that to me they seem no other than a forlorn hope, mustered under a valorous, cautious, and enthu-

siastic leader, who have volunteered out of the army of Christ, to go against the strongest hold of the enemy, and regain for the Church the precious position which she had lost in the crowded cities of our land. Their success hath approved their valour and their skill. Other bands have started, in other quarters, against this, the most rugged front of depravity and vice. And, as hath been already said, if churchmen would become once more the shepherds of the people, not petty politicians, or pitiful dependants upon the great,—would they stand for themselves upon the basis of their sacred function, and become God's royal nation, Christ's ambassadors, and the captains of the militant Church, then would health spring up in darkness, and the cities, now famous for disaffection, and branded with sedition, would become the nurseries of new devices for the good of Church and state. Let the people of this parish, therefore, bless the Lord, who made this renovation first to arise within their borders. But if ye will not rise, with one accord, to bless Him for all His gracious benefits, then your children will, who, from being starved, are plentifully fed with the word of life; if they will not, then the very stones of your houses will, in which these pious men have so often ministered, and the walls of this church will, which have so oft echoed to your pastor's unrivalled voice.

For myself, I render to him and to his spiritual staff the tribute of my admiration and gratitude. Our walks together, amidst the streets and lanes of this parish, the sweet counsel we took over its needs—our devisings for the relief of the poor, and the upholding of the broken in heart, and the reclaiming of the hardened; our sick-bed, death-bed, funeral scenes—when shall these be forgotten? And can I forget, my fellow-labourers, your fatherhood of the orphans, your schooling of the destitute, your search after the lost sheep and wanderers from the fold, where you gave your money, your time, your influence, your service, everything which nature, which religion could suggest? No! these things I never shall forget. They shall remain the annals and memorials of this blessed parish—they shall remain the proof of your

Christian worth—a trophy to the city you inhabit—a credit to the species itself.

These obligations, which I speak to you in general, such is your harmony of character, I might speak to you individually; but to him who is the soul and head of all, I dare not trust myself, though of the firmest nerve, to speak the nature and number of my obligations. But these obligations are not to be told in public; they are the private treasure of the soul, which she should visit, like the miser, in secret, and dote over alone, and, because she prizes them dearly, speak of them seldom, lest some daring hand should seize and scatter them abroad in sport, or in cruelty use them against himself.

In fine, then, this is the burden of my obligations to my God. He hath given me the fellowship of a man mighty in His Church, an approving congregation of His people, the attachment of a populous corner of His vineyard. I ask no more of Heaven for the future, but to grant me the continuance of the portion which, by the space of three years, I have here enjoyed. But this I need not expect. Never shall I again find another man of transcendent genius whom I can love as much as I admire—into whose house I can go in and out like a son, whom I can revere as a father and serve with the devotion of a child; never shall I find another hundred consociated men of piety, by free-will consociated, whose every sentiment I can adopt, and whose every scheme I can find delight to second. And I fear I shall never find another parish of ten thousand, into every house of which I was welcomed as a friend, and solicited back as I had been a brother.

And now, brethren, I thank you, in fine, for the patience with which you have heard me on this and on all other occasions. I have nothing to boast of, as St Paul had when he parted with the Ephesian elders. I can speak of your kindness and of the Almighty's grace; but of my own performances I cannot speak. Imperfections beset me round, which it is not my part to confess, save to the God of mercy. All these imperfections I crave you to forgive. Forget your injuries, real or imagined. Lay asleep your suspicions. My

failings forget. For fain would I have a place in your esteem, as you have in mine. And besides this I have no favour to ask—your kind remembrance, that is all.

No favour, save this one, that I might be of service in my turn. And this, my last request, take not as words of course, but in good and sober truth—that if any of my friends in this people, any, the poorest of my friends in this parish, do find themselves in the capital of this empire, whither I go, in need of a friend, they will do me a welcome service, in the day of that need, to apply to him, who hath laid before you, in the preceding Discourse, no empty show of feeling got up for the occasion, but genuine and heartfelt emotions, delivered against custom, against suggestion of bashfulness delivered, because they were too strong to remain unexpressed.

"Finally, then, brethren, farewell." The Lord of heaven and earth prosper you in your various conditions of wealth and poverty, good fortune or evil fortune. May your spirits prosper in the way of peace and holiness, through the word of the gospel of Christ, and the supply of His ministering Spirit. May your families rejoice in unity, in pure affection, and in unblemished reputation. May you see your children's children, with God's blessing upon them all. May your affairs prosper, and your hearts, filled with fatness, rejoice before the Lord all the days of your life. In sickness may your Comforter be nigh, and in death your Saviour be not to seek but to enjoy. Finally, live in peace and good brotherhood. Honour those who are over you in the Lord, even as ye have honoured us. Pray for us and the ministry of the gospel in the city we are bound to.

And now God grant, that while the roof-tree of this temple stands, and these walls resist the hand of all-consuming time, there may be no voice uttered from this chair but the voice of the gospel of peace, that all who come up to worship here may be accepted of the Lord, and that we who have met so oft together, and joined the voice of our prayer, and the notes of our praise together, may yet lift the voice of our prayer from beneath the altar of the living God, and minister our praise around His holy throne. Amen and amen.

II.

PREPARATORY TO THE LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION-STONE OF THE NATIONAL SCOTCH CHURCH, REGENT SQUARE.*

MEN AND BRETHREN,—After long and anxious deliberations, and many prayers intermingled with many fears, it hath at length pleased the God of Zion, having proved your patience and trust in His name, to grant the desire of the hearts of this people, by the appointment of a day during this week in which the house shall be founded wherein you and your children may worship the Lord God of your fathers. This is a most important event, and the greatest blessing from the Lord which hath come to us since we were united as a Church of Christ, and which ought not to be passed over with neglect, or treated with indifferent ceremony, but regarded, as it is in truth, the bountiful answer of many prayers, and the beginning of a good work which you have been honoured of the Lord to undertake for the spiritual edification of generations that are yet to come. For however frequent custom may wear out its impressiveness, or idle ceremony tread upon its sanctity, to the minds of all thoughtful and pious men, the founding of a new church, wherein the gospel of Christ is to be preached, and the wholesome discipline of the Church of Christ is to be administered over the souls of a believing people, is a most gracious and most valuable boon from Heaven to the flock for whose security the fold is constructed; is to the Church a token for good from her ever-living Head; and to the city within whose bounds this sacred place is founded, it is an occasion of gratu-

* Preached on Sabbath, 27th June 1824.

lation more worthy than if a strong bulwark were added to her walls, or a high tower to her palaces, for verily a bulwark of righteousness is added to her from the Lord of hosts, and a temple of peace, whose gate is never shut, is constructed to the praise and honour of the Saviour of men.

Now, the Psalmist, who had experience of the defeat and success of worldly hopes almost beyond any other man, hath beautifully said, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves along with him." In which sentiment he toucheth not with more tenderness than truth the feeling with which the seed of every good enterprise should be cast upon the uncertain waters of this troubled estate, whenever there is such fluctuation of affairs, and such combination of evil accidents, and withal such short-sightedness in those who devise, and such feebleness in those who execute, that by far the larger number of enterprises undertaken by men prove abortive and come to naught. Of which uncertainty being prudently and feelingly aware, a wise man setteth no work on foot without apprehending all the hazards to which it is exposed, and with a certain sadness committeth it to the care and providence of the Lord. He droppeth a tear over those the children of his soul, as they go forth from their native home of hope and desire within his breast, to force their way into existence amidst the trials of the world, with all their infirmities on their head. And such schemes and ideas of good as have been thus set forth amidst much carefulness and apprehension, and even tears, the Psalmist pronounceth as sure, so far as anything in the future is sure, to be prospered by the Lord; and often the faithfulness of His people hath been sufficiently tried, to be answered with gladness, and then cometh the time for joy—then their apprehension shall be turned into gratulation, and their mouth filled with laughter, and their tongue with singing, and they shall be like them that dream, when they look upon the things which God hath done for them, whereof they are glad. Nevertheless, though at the undertaking of every work it be good to join trembling with our mirth, it is not less so to join faith and hope with

our trembling. And as it gilded the evening of King David's days with a serene glory, and served his last hours with a most grateful theme of prayer and praise and pious rehearsal to the people, that he had been honoured of God to receive the revelation of the device, and to bring together the materials for His holy temple, although he was not permitted to lay one stone thereof upon another; so do I think you ought now to rejoice together that we have been enabled of God to overcome the difficulties which stood in the way of our undertaking, that He hath gotten you the means of carrying it forward, and that ere we meet on another Sabbath for His holy service, we shall have set our hands to the work for which we have long prayed with our hearts. The Sabbath will come, and many of us, we trust, will be spared to see it dawn, when we shall assemble under the completed arches of that house whose foundation we are about to lay in prayer and righteousness, and whose walls have been reared in anxiety and carefulness, look upon the work of our hands, and rejoice that it is good, to sing with acclamations of joy, and to fill the house with the loud song of our praise, even as Solomon with the elders and congregation of Israel, being assembled in high ceremony, did consecrate with sacrifices and with the voice of earnest prayer and supplication, and fill with the triumphant jubilee of their praise that same house over which his father David glorified himself while yet it had no being save in the word and promise of the Lord. It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lift up their voice with the trumpets, and cymbals, and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, "For he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever," that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of Jehovah; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud, for the glory of Jehovah had filled the house of God.

Therefore we are moved to treat this event, which custom hath secularised, as a great spiritual blessing which it behoveth us rightly to consider and weigh. We would treat of it as a dispensation of the grace of God, not as a work of man, and fill our hearts with all joy in believing that the Lord

hath heard and answered our many prayers. And we would consider the spiritual magnitude of the work, that we may strongly contend with all its hindrances; we would shew the value and worth of it in the highest sense, that we may not be alarmed at the cost of time and thought and materials which it requireth; we would shew the common interest which we and our children have in its completion, that with our heart and soul we may labour in the work; and so we would commit it for success or for defeat, for good or for ill, into the hands of Him who hath written in His Word, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass."

Christian brethren of this flock, give thanks and praise unto the Lord your God, who hath so prospered you and the labours of His servant, your pastor, in the midst of you, that it is become necessary to strengthen the stakes and lengthen the cords of your tabernacle, and to build a house unto His name, wherein you and your children may worship the Lord God of your fathers.

A few years ago you were a scattered flock; but a remnant was saved from wandering, which it hath pleased the Lord to reckon for a generation. In little more time than it took Paul to gather a church at Ephesus, hath your pastor been blessed to gather a church amongst you, and to ordain elders over the flock, and to set the congregation in order before the Lord; and now the seed of our Church in these parts, and those of our countrymen who go down into the sea in ships, have a place wherein they can rest and sanctify the Sabbath unto the Lord. And ye have a spiritual counsellor in all your spiritual distresses, a man of God to set forth the words of sound doctrine, and to labour amongst you from house to house. Therefore have you good occasion of joy and rejoicing, you and your children, this day before the Lord; and I call upon you to rejoice with all your hearts, and to sing psalms with mirth and great gladness, in these the courts of His house.

To have brought of your substance to the work, you have contributed in your degrees, and given portions, as did the

princes and captains of Israel to the building of Solomon's temple, and because the silver and gold are the Lord's, you have not refused to render up to Him a part of that which He gave. And what remaineth to do, I know your liberality will accomplish, when the Lord shall have further blessed your pastor's labours, so that this place shall be ready to overflow, like to that which you have left. But better and more precious far than silver or gold, or heaps of prey, is the grace and service of the Lord. And though I commend your generosity in erecting so comely a structure to His holy service, I tell you of a truth that much, much remaineth yet to be done. It is with the heart and the soul, and the strength and the mind, that our God is to be loved; and our Saviour requires that, if need be, we should part with all and follow Him, forsake father and mother, and brother and sister; yea, and our own life, in order to be His disciples. Therefore, beloved brethren, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, cleanse your hearts before the Lord, and seek Him with all your soul. And if any man have a sin and a transgression, let him come up unto the house, and make confession with his lips, and be humbled in his heart, and the blood of Christ shall wash his iniquity away; and if any man have an infirmity of spirit, or any of his children have a thorn in the flesh, or a messenger of Satan to buffet him, let him come up into this house, and make it known before the Lord, and He will make His grace sufficient for him, and His strength shall be perfected in his weakness; and if any man is sick, let prayers be made for him by the elders of the congregation in this place before the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall heal the sick; and if any man is going into perilous places to behold the wonders of the Lord in the mighty ways, or see His footsteps in another land, let him come up into this place and seek the protection and providence of the Lord, and he shall be preserved in the day of his need. And if the faith of any one be faint, here let it flourish again by the preaching of the word; and if the love of any wax cold, here let it be warmed by the brotherly love and devotion of the people; and if the Lord straiten the worldly condition of any one, let

the flock help him. "Lift up the hands that hang down, and confirm the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way."

Then while you walk in love, the blessing of the Lord shall be upon you; He shall cause you to flourish like the green bay-tree, and you shall see of the desire of your heart, and be satisfied. And your children, when they come up to this place, after your heads are laid in the grave, shall praise God for His grace shewn unto their fathers; and they shall raise again His temple when time hath crumbled it, and future pastors, perusing the chronicles of this church, shall take heart from the blessing of God upon our labours; and thus shall they be encouraged in the way, and their hearts shall be edified in the knowledge of Christ. And you shall receive them—nursed in this temple as their spiritual cradle—you shall receive them to heaven, gather their children, and their children's children.

Oh, why may it not be so that this house, and the doctrine delivered therein, may save many generations, and add a goodly number to the general assembly of the first-born on high! Therefore rejoice for your children's sake no less than for your own, and teach your children to hallow these courts and to reverence the threshold of this door; yea, lay it upon them as a dying charge, not to depart from its sustenance, but to be around it for a glory and defence.

And we, brethren, who are witnesses this day of this religious festivity, when a wandering church hath been brought to a settled habitation, is it not a goodly work this which the Lord hath put it into the hearts of our brethren to do? Nay, but is it not a goodly work which these hands have finished? Let us rejoice with them. Arise, let us rejoice; and let us not come empty-handed to them; but, seeing much remaineth, (for in their zeal they have gone beyond their means, liberally depending upon the large providence of God,) let us not be slow to help them, or scanty of our offerings. Let us pour into their exhausted treasury what we can afford, that the Lord may bless our store, and that our brethren may go on rejoicing, when thus the Lord hath given them a good

report in Zion, and enabled them to set up their Ebenezer amidst the congratulations of their friends and countrymen, and fellow-Christians and brothers in the common faith. And now may the blessing of God rest upon pastor and people, and may He set His name here for ever, and may they keep by the faith of their fathers, and become mighty among the thousands of Israel. This is our prayer; this is the prayer of us all. God hear us, God answer us, for the sake of His Church, which is the pillar and ground of the truth.

III.

THANKSGIVING AFTER LAYING THE FOUNDATION OF THE NATIONAL SCOTCH CHURCH, REGENT SQUARE.*

1 SAM. VII. 12.

Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.

IT is now two years, my dearly-beloved people, since the Lord joined us together in the sacred and tender relation of pastor and people, during which period we have had such constant experience of His goodness, and at length so prosperous a beginning of the good work which He hath moved us to undertake, that I feel it to be required of us, both publicly in the house of God and privately in our own closets, to look back and consider the tokens of His kindness, and stir up our hearts with joy and thankfulness to Him who hath helped us hitherto.

Often have I endeavoured, but never been able, to set forth to you in language my idea of a Christian church; and often have I endeavoured, but never have been able, to manifest by deeds my idea of the pastor of a Christian church: which two things if we could by any means understand, then should it appear, without the help of any demonstration, that it is more high and honourable in man to acquit himself aright of the duties of a member or a pastor of a church, than to sit in senates, or govern provinces and kingdoms; and that it is a higher aim and more lofty ambition to bring that little commonwealth of spirits to perfection, than to perfect the political government of states; and that the approaches which from time to time the Lord enables us to make towards that high spiritual end are more worthy of thanksgiving, being more real and liberal boons of His grace, than peace and prosperity, victory and triumph. But

* Preached in July 1824.

while the ideas, the low and vulgar ideas of a church, as a body of men who profess the faith of Christ and worship in the same temple, of a pastor as a man who preaches to them and profits by them,—while these ideas remain, the sentiment which I have expressed must appear the uttermost extravagance, and the thanksgiving discourse which I propose this day to hold for certain blessings and certain promises of further blessing, must appear the uttermost affectation. Therefore, that I may have the sympathies of those who hear me, if possible their consent and approbation, and, by the blessing of God, their conviction, their devout thanksgivings and acknowledgments, I deem it good to attempt again the exposition of those ideas which I have so often attempted, and in which I seem to myself to have as often failed, and am most likely destined to fail again.

For what man, cradled in the agitation and turmoil of this world, and perplexed with the inquietude and rebellion of his own spirit, is able ever to form a comprehension of that communion of harmony and love which Christ intended that His Church should be? Or what Christian, ever accustomed to the broken and distorted images which the various sects and parties of Christendom give of the true Church,—each, like a false mirror, distorting it, or, like a false medium, colouring it a little, and a little refracting it from its proper place,—can so disengage from his memory and early associations these imperfect ideas and false pictures of the Church, as to be in a condition for admiring the pure simplicity and unadorned, unaffected form of it which the Lord hath given in His Word?

It is a body of men who have constrained themselves to forget all difference of nation and of tongue, of kindred and of people, amongst whom there is no more Jew nor Greek, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free, whose citizenship is in heaven, whose king is Jesus, whose laws are the gospel, and who, looking upon one another, respect not the outward man, his comeliness, his dignity, or his rank, but respect the inner man of the heart, his piety, his righteousness, and his truth. It is not to the image of well-formed and comely nature, to which taste hath respect,—it is not to the image of polite and

elegant accomplishments, to which fashion hath respect,—it is not to the image of worldly wisdom, to which policy hath respect,—nor to the image of learning and science, in their manifold variety, to which the Muses have respect;—but it is to the image of Christ within a man, the well-favoured image of righteousness and true holiness, to which one member of the Church hath respect and yieldeth reverence in another. There is an idea of spiritual perfection, a large and liberal idea, to which each member of the Church seeketh to be conformed; and as he is conformed thereto he endureth himself, as another is conformed thereto he loveth him and giveth him honour. By the same principle by which he desireth it in himself, he loveth it in another. And wherever he seeth it in clearer manifestation than he beholdeth it in himself, that man he honoureth more than himself, albeit he be a prince and the other a peasant, he a master and the other a slave. For selfishness is destroyed; that whereof another man is proud—his proper, distinct, and well-defined self—of that a Christian is ashamed, abhorring it in dust and in ashes. His personality, however princely born, however intellectually endowed, however cast in nature's mould, he humbleth to the dust and trampleth under foot, he crucifieth and putteth to death. He nicknameth it in his scorn the old man with his corruption and lusts, his body of sin and death, his corruption, his mortality. This naturally-gifted, artificially-adorned, and worldly-endowed person which he is casting off, he seeketh another righteousness, another distinction, and another boast, even the righteousness of Christ and the glory of His cross, and the distinction of being despised for the sake of His everlasting testimony. And this doth not one, but every one who is moved by the gospel of Christ. All have a common distrust of themselves and this world's artificial distinctions and unspiritual judgments, and with equal endeavour, if not with equal steps, they seek not themselves but the Lord, into whose faith being baptized, they wish to be baptized also into His Spirit. And they cry out, I count all things but loss for Christ; for Christ I have suffered the loss of all things. I am become a fool for Christ. I am become despised for Christ. He is all my

sufficiency and all my trust, my wisdom, my righteousness, my sanctification, my redemption. Oh for the fellowship of His sufferings! Oh for the fellowship of His resurrection! Oh that I might be found in the likeness of His death, that I might be found also in the likeness of His resurrection!

Now inasmuch as men build themselves up in what is peculiar to themselves, admiring and cherishing that which distinguisheth them from others, they are divided, proud, selfish, and full of strife, wrath, quarrelling, and all uncharitableness; but inasmuch as they look to something common,—be it the commonweal, be it universal truth, or the natural image of virtue, or in a secondary kind of taste, or of science, or of learning,—they become united, kindly, also civil and generous. But when a body of men do not in one but in all things—in the whole form and structure of their character, in the spirit of their actions, in their faith, in their feelings, in their hopes, their fears, desires, interests, and ambitions—seek to be conformed to one life, one truth, one spirit, one character, one everything, it must come to pass that the tendency of those men must be constantly towards sympathy and union, that the divisive and discordant and distinct must disappear, the common, the generous, the friendly, and the paternal be cultivated and enlarged, and that state of perfectness approached which is denominated by the word charity,—a word which hath no corresponding term in any language but the language of the Christian, no correlative thing in any state of society but the Church, whose thorough community I am doing my feeble endeavour to set forth.

The word church, therefore, denotes a body of men living together, feeling and acting towards one another, under the influence of those principles of love and charity under which Christ acted to the world, which moved Him, though rich, for our sakes to become poor, though the equal of God, to make Himself of no reputation, to humble His heavenly state to come to the condition of the earth, to bow His head as a man, and endure the ignominious death of the cross, for not His equals, not His friends, not good men, nor even righteous men, but for wicked men, for the rebellious, for His enemies, for those very malefactors who with wicked hearts did

crucify and slay Him. This spirit which He was of, hitherto unknown upon the earth, this example, above the imagination of mortal men, this life of sacrifice beyond price, of humiliation beyond measure, of beneficence beyond estimation of men or angels,—this spirit, example, and life, is constantly looked upon, studied, besought of God, attempted, practised by all His followers towards one another, and towards the world, the wicked and persecuting world. And in as far as this new spirit and life of Christ gaineth over the old spirit and life of nature, they become one with Christ and one with each other, one in heart and soul, and compose the church—and two such men are as much a church as two hundred or two thousand. For it is not the number of members, but the condition of being,—this interwoven and intertwined unity of nature,—which is designated by that most holy and heavenly name; and the prosperity and thriving of a church are to be judged of by the progress of this heavenly harmony and Christian spirit of charity. A few in such bonds of perfectness will do more for the cause of the church than multitudes who take the name but study not the purpose of the society. The name being nothing, as hath been said, if it be not significant of the purpose; which purpose is no less than the glorious one of uniting the broken and divided earth in heavenly harmony again, bringing human life to be transacted after Christ's life, and human kind to be Christ's kind, and peace—outward and inward, private and public—to prevail over the world, and charity, such as no poet hath dreamed of in the silver or the golden age, but which prophets have sung of through the long and troubled vista of distant ages.

I may take an illustration of this which hath been said from a subject dear and familiar to us all. Liberty is to a nation what charity is to a church,—all its strength, all its activity, and all its greatness; it denoteth that state of union in which people are most happy and powerful; and where it hath been understood and established, it giveth to a few united men that energy and might which many otherwise united cannot have. Whereof ancient Greece is an example, which, cooped within limits hardly larger than a

petty province, coped with and overcame as much of the world as could be numbered in arms against it, and held an empire of taste and of letters still unrivalled. Whereof we are as striking an instance, who, by the power of that political union called liberty, have cantoned the world with our fortified stations, and held its largest, finest territories under our sway, not of terror and tyranny, but of law and government; and have, by our arts and sciences, subjected the whole face of nature to ourselves, and brought every production of the animal and vegetable kingdom in all parts of the world to do homage to our power. The ambitious man who sought the monarchy of Europe established no power like to this; he established nothing at all; he subverted, like the thunderbolt and lightning, but he established nothing, because he had no image of liberty in his soul, no reverence or desire of it in others, but was selfish, and therefore dissocial. The Autocrat of all the Russias, the Emperor of China, can lay the foundation of no empire like this; this kind of power cometh only to men governed by the principle of free government. The Lord blighteth all tyranny with barrenness; all true government He honoureth with productiveness and increase. And these rewards are everywhere awaiting the noble-minded and disinterested, who will be daring enough to break the yoke of others, and self-governed enough to guard against their own arbitrariness and misrule.

Now, as liberty, or a state of good and wise government, is the condition in which a nation is strong and happy, and as health is the condition in which the body of man is able for its work, and the mind for its cogitations—that is, in both cases when each member of the corporation worketh harmonious with the rest, and so maketh up a united whole; so, in a higher kind, charity, harmony, and commonness of spirit is the condition in which a church is efficient and strong to produce its own wellbeing, to propagate itself, to enlarge, to last and endure upon the face of the earth, where it hath so much to encounter and overcome. And the attainment of this Christian charity, this community of inward goods, I regard as the whole intention and reward of our religion, so far as this world

is concerned; and the church or fellowship of Christians in which it is realised may consider that they have reached the mark of the prize of their high calling upon the earth, and that they have no further object than to seek to diffuse abroad the enjoyments of their condition to those who have not yet tasted the Goshen-peace of it, but are afflicted with all the plagues of the world.

This communion and harmony of our souls with one another, my beloved brethren, is that for which our Lord prayed in His intercessory prayer for His Church, the last act which He did for His disciples before the hour and power of darkness had dominion over Him. He prayed that they might be one, as He and the Father were one. Then, embracing a wider circuit of desire, He looked forward to all who should believe on Him through their word, and prayed that they might all be one, "as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

Now, my beloved brethren, conceiving these ideas of a church which I have explained above, and perceiving that there is no other evidence of our sanctification but this communion of saints, and no success of the preached gospel amongst ourselves, nor dispensation of it abroad, but by the same all-hallowed and all-sanctified communion, I look with anxiety and watch with carefulness to discover whether this blessed condition of things is working out amongst ourselves; and I am bound to give thanks according as I see it growing more and more towards perfection. This is my joy, and this my boasting, that the love of Christ aboundeth in the midst of you, that each man is seeking with earnestness the resemblance of Christ, and that all are becoming partakers of the one Divine Spirit and the one Divine nature; that the oil of united brotherhood is poured into every heart from the same fountain of love; and that not by constraint, but by sweet and natural consequence, we are growing into one body, of which

all the members being fitly framed together, and supplying their proper use, maketh increase of the whole in love.

And viewed in this Christian sense, we are glad to declare unto you that our thankfulness aboundeth, and that the thankfulness of all ought this day to abound. Two years from this time we were not known to each other even by the knowledge of the outward sight. And many, very many of those who now sit under the ministry of word and sacrament were then altogether unknown to God and to godliness, to the thoughts of death, judgment, and eternity. Now we are united as a congregation to offer up one common sacrifice, and to listen to one common doctrine; and many of us are united as a church, as the members of the body of Christ, to feel to one another the tenderness, and do for one another the charity, which hath been described above. It would be thought a matter of thankfulness if a horde of wandering, idle people were reclaimed to regular and industrious ways of life, if a barbarous and savage horde were reclaimed by justice and civilisation; but what less, nay, how much more, should it be rejoiced over when the loose, licentious, and roving affections of the soul are brought to listen to that counsel which heretofore they heeded not, and so prepared for the godly discipline and government of the Church? Therefore ought we to give thanks unto the Lord that so many from the outfield and wilderness of the spirit have been brought to haunt, and dwell, and take counsel with those who have been already won from the power of Satan to serve the living God. And if we rejoice and give thanks on their account, how much upon their own account ought they to give thanks that they have been brought to the congregations of the righteous, and the assemblies of the godly, and to pray that the Lord, who hath constrained them to become hearers of the word, would further constrain them to be doers of the same! O brethren, make not of yourselves any longer strangers to the covenants of promise; be not any longer voluntary exiles from the commonwealth of Israel. Nevertheless, rejoice that ye are this day seated under the canopy of a holy roof, rather than wandering up and down amongst the dissipated haunts of the city and the country round.

This is one first cause of thanksgiving as a church, that the Lord hath brought so many who were afar off to draw nigh and listen to the message of our lips.

In the beginning of our ministry to the souls of this people, while yet unacquainted with that which they could bear, we kept rather, in the general doctrine of our commission, the overtures of salvation unto all, and the arguments by which they should take hold of the same. We argued the insufficiency of an intellectual and moral, the degradation of a sensual, and the necessity of a spiritual life. We recommended to you private meditation of these things, and the laying of them to heart; but we were fearful to advance into the special privileges and prerogatives of the people of God, being desirous to win the ear and approbation of your minds before we advanced to debate with your hearts the strongholds of their idolatry. Now it hath pleased the Lord to give us such favour and acceptance in the midst of you, that we feel no occasion for restraint, and, whether in private or in public, we take full liberty to signify to you all our mind, and all which we conceive to be the mind of God. The only thing now which occupies my care is that I may become more enlightened myself, in order that I may enlighten others; that being more fully converted unto the Lord, I may be a more fit instrument for converting the souls of others. At this day I feel that I enjoy with you a liberty of prophesying as large as the heart of a prophet or an apostle could have desired. It is the most glorious privilege of an intellectual and spiritual man to have an audience before whom he may display all his convictions of truth. This the Lord hath given to me, and sore, sore shall I answer for the neglect of so great a privilege. For this, therefore, we have next occasion of thankfulness as a church,—that there subsists between pastor and people that sweet confidence of love which enables them without offence to speak unto each other whatever the Lord moveth them to speak. Here are, first, the people gathered together from all quarters to listen; and next, their good disposition to hear the word which is spoken to them by the minister of Christ.

Thirdly, let us rejoice and give thanks that the Lord hath

spread over this congregation of His people an increasing spirit of seriousness and inquiry, and that He hath called not a few to perceive the sinfulness of their ways and flee from the wrath to come. If this church hath been instrumental in saving but one soul, that soul is a most ample reward for all that you have laboured, and for all that I have spoken; if it hath been instrumental in making ten righteous men, it is as good as an intercessor unto Heaven for the city where it is placed, seeing ten men would have interceded for Sodom with success. And if, as I have reason to believe, a goodly number more have been moved to embrace the gospel of Christ and turn unto righteousness,—if in every family which I have visited my words concerning life eternal have been heard with acceptance, and I have been besought to come again, and to come often and speak to them of the things which concern their everlasting peace,—if every man in this congregation to whom I am known, from the youngest to the oldest, gives ear to the word of my ministry in private, and seeketh not to shun the subject of his soul's dear concerns, upon which I feel emboldened in season and out of season to discourse,—if my long and most tedious discourses from this place are heard with unwearied patience, and there be no anxieties on your part save for my own health and well-being,—if, finally, at every communion, with contrite hearts, warm devotion, and pious purpose of obedience, many come seeking admission to the table of the Lord, and if now to my instructions for that end more assemble and more patiently listen than in my fondest moments of hope I had anticipated, what! shall I not be convinced—shall I refuse to be convinced that the hand of the Lord is with us, that He hath abundantly blessed our labours, and that He setteth before us a plentiful and abundant promise of harvest? That you accept sound doctrine, that you turn not your ear from reproof, that you suffer the word of exhortation, that you bear spiritual interpretations of the truth, and reject them not out of a shallow self-sufficiency and pride of reason,—these things give me gladness and hope that it will please the Lord, after He hath tried our patience for a while, to give us still more abundant fruits, and bestow upon us a still larger effusion of His Holy Spirit.

And, further, let us be thankful that to all these labours of love and hopes of future good the Lord hath given a pledge of permanency, in that which He has permitted us during the last week to witness. In itself it is a small matter whether we gather ourselves together into this or into any other place; but it is not a small matter whether we shall look forward to a settled and a constant ministry to ourselves and to our children, whether we shall be at the mercy of others, or possessed of a permanent abode. It is not a small matter whether we shall, in our narrow quarters, be pressed upon by every hindrance of rest and of devotion, or be delivered into the enjoyment of Sabbath rest and church tranquillity. We can now look forward to the comfort and quiet of other congregations, to that simple condition which the simplicity of our worship requireth. We have had a most difficult way to make, through every misrepresentation of vanity and ambition. You, as well as I, have stood in imminent peril from the visits of rank and dignity which have been made to us. There was much good to be expected from it; therefore we willingly paid the price. There was much reason that they who heard the truth but seldom, should hear it when they were so disposed; therefore we forewent the conveniences, and laid ourselves open to the risk. But they are bad conditions to our being cemented together as a church, and operate to withdraw us from ourselves to those conspicuous characters by whom we are visited. I have not ceased to warn you of these things; I have not ceased to be upon my own guard against them; but I do rejoice with all my heart that the Lord, by lengthening our cords and strengthening our stakes, will give us the power of taking amongst us those who are worthily moved thereto, and so enabling us at length to sit down and worship under our own vine and fig-tree in quietness and peace.

Now therefore, my beloved brethren, let us give thanks unto the Lord, publicly and privately, that He hath not removed our candlestick out of its place, but continues to visit us with the light of the knowledge of His truth. Let us acknowledge His goodness to us as a people, and prove ourselves not unworthy of His grace, by walking with truth and

simplicity after His statutes. Especially let us cultivate the character and graces of a Christian Church, living with each other in sweet brotherly communion, and taking loving counsel together, as becometh saints ; and if any one have a quarrel with another, let him forgive, even as God for Christ's sake hath also forgiven us. And if we are not of one mind, let us distrust our own selves, and esteem each the other better than himself; and let us seek the common truth in Him who is the truth, resting assured that where we disagree it is because there is a nonconformity with the image of Christ upon the one side or the other. In this way, by gentleness, forbearance, forgiveness, love, and charity, let us grow towards one another in the grace of the gospel; and above all things let us seek, with constant and fervent prayer, the blessing of God upon the church, mentioning each other by name in our private prayers unto the Lord, and seeking for each other the grace in which each seemeth deficient; and as it is my weighty office to instruct all, let all pray for me that I may be instructed and taught of God, who teacheth savingly and to profit.

Thus, my dearly-beloved brethren, as the walls of that house which we have founded arise towards heaven, let the inward spiritual edification of the church in charity and wisdom go on, day by day, towards the perfection of heavenly communion. As the outward temple is wrought into beauty and proportion, let the spiritual temple, which is built of living stones, be beautiful in all the proportions of righteousness, and before the house made with hands hath been completed may we of this flock have become a house of God, and may I have been taught how to behave myself in the house of God, which is the pillar and ground of the truth.

IV.

ON EDUCATION.*

PSALM XIX. 7–9.

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes: the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

THERE is no subject at present so prominent in the public eye, or which, in one way or another, engageth so much of the generous care of public-spirited and religious men, as the education of the people, which hath, by various devices, new and old, proceeded within the last half century, and is now proceeding, to a degree heretofore unexampled,—insomuch that those who formerly opposed, are fain to be silent, or to adopt some mitigated form of the innovation; and everywhere new inventions are brought out and patronised, whereof, during the last year, two well worthy of observation—schools for infants and schools for mechanics—have arisen, as by enchantment, over the face of the island. And, in foreign parts, a seminary of youth, conducted on enlightened principles, is deemed as worthy of being visited as heretofore a court would have been, and is wont to be written of in public journals, discoursed of in private companies, and tried by experiment at home. And the zeal of one party for liberal education hath stirred up the zeal of another for peculiar and more restricted education; each party perceiving of what a mighty engine they are either to gain or to lose the working. And at the same time to carry the invention into

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the deepest and darkest recesses of our cities and towns, a plan of dividing them into local districts, with each a religious and benevolent man over it, hath been digested and recommended, and put in practice by one of the most gifted men of the age; and is already become universal in the chief cities of the north, and is making rapid way in these parts. And to indicate the effect which the spirit of zeal and invention to educate the people is producing, there hath sprung up like the summer fruits, and everywhere lie scattered like autumn leaves, works composed and digested for the infant and the youthful mind, as introductory to science, and literature, and history, and general knowledge; calculated for all conditions of the mind, from infancy to manhood. And periodical works which circulate amongst the people are multiplied a hundred-fold, and newspapers almost a thousand-fold within the last half-century. And, in short, every source of information you can appeal to, seems to testify with one voice, that the capacity of the country for knowledge, and its intellectual appetite, hath increased beyond any other change, fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel concerning the latter days, "that many should run to and fro, and knowledge should be increased."

The question which naturally ariseth in the mind of every good man interested in the commonweal is — And what effect is this new element likely to produce in the midst of us? To the answering of which question every considerate person is intent; for he is blind indeed who perceiveth not that this is a most penetrating and restless power, which even already hath begun to change the face of many things. It hath brought the minds of thousands, of tens of thousands, yea of millions, and tens of millions (for we look also abroad) into communication with one another, who heretofore dwelt widely apart; and it hath put between men who dwell together, a revealer of thoughts within them, which would have dwelt unperceived for ever; and each man it hath lifted from the condition of an unknown, unfelt individual, to the high and dangerous pre-eminence of thinking upon the abstrusest subjects, and judging of the greatest men. It hath multiplied the power of the press to an unlimited extent, and begotten a new power, the power of public opinion, capable of controlling

prince and people, governors and governed, and the press itself, (for the press is generally at the beck of public opinion,) to which it seems to me that almost everything payeth court and deference. To this new influence I attribute the apparently improved policy of states, and character of men, the outward civility of manners, the ostentation of liberal opinions, the prevention of many atrocious actions, and the concealment of more; seeing it is in the power of any one who can indite a letter, or convey a piece of intelligence, to submit the unpopular act in one day to a jury of several thousands; after which, without any care of his, it will be submitted to a jury of several millions; an ordeal of censure which no man liketh his best, much less his worst, deeds to undergo. This capacity of reading and writing hath give to common sense a local habitation and a name, a unity and a strength, which hardly anything can defy. The common it buildeth up to heaven; the personal it streweth upon the earth. It is the appeal to the multitude, the ostracism of the people. And, if the voice of the people be the voice of God, it is a most godly power; but if the voice of the people be against the voice of God, then every godly thing should look to it and have a care of itself.

But, however interesting, it would be away from the purpose of our present meeting, and inconsistent with the sacredness of this my office, to enter into the effects which the universal education of the people is likely to produce upon the political condition of men; yet is it my duty, and shall be my endeavour, to open before you at this time what effect that kind of education now so rapidly diffusing itself throughout the land may be expected to produce upon the prosperity of vital religion, and what part for or against the interests of Zion it is likely to accomplish. This I shall do by treating, first, of education in general—what it should include, and what it should aim at; secondly, from the idea of education thus obtained, endeavour to form an estimate of that kind of it which is so rapidly diffusing itself; thirdly, inquire with whom this great charge of educating the rising generation should be intrusted; and, lastly, address myself to plead the cause of that society for which we are assembled.

And may God be my instructor, while I do my endeavour to open the subject of instruction to so many wise and reverend men as are now before me.

I. In order that we may rightly conduct the education of youth, whether in families or in schools, in private or in public; and that we may become good judges of the way in which it is to be conducted, and so fulfil to God, and to our country, and to the rising generation, the great trust from which no man is exempt in one form or another, whether of duty or of charity; it is most necessary that we should have a just idea of that which is included under the word Education, —to which idea all our plans should be shaped, and all the details of our plans be subservient. Now it seemeth to me that the true idea of education is contained in the word itself, which signifies the act of drawing out, or educing; and being applied in a general sense to man, must signify the drawing forth or bringing out those powers which are implanted in him by the hand of his Maker. This, therefore, we must adopt as the rudimental idea of education; that it aims to do for man that which the agriculturist does for the fruits of the earth, and the gardener for the more choice and beautiful productions thereof; what the forester does for the trees of the forest, and the tamer and breaker-in of animals does for the several kinds of wild creatures; this same office in a higher kind, according to the higher dignity of the subject, doth education propose to do for the offspring of man, who is to be the possessor of the earth, and the enjoyer of its beautiful and fragrant fruits, the monarch of all the creatures, the possessor of knowledge, the subject of laws, and the worshipper of God. And that system of education alone can be regarded as liberal and enlarged, as complete and catholic, which takes into the compass of its view all the powers and capacities which are given to man, and capable of being educed or brought forth by good and skilful husbandry.

It is necessary, therefore, to consider and classify those powers which are given to human nature; those original capacities of the soul of man, which all possess, though in different degrees; the universal and catholic attributes of

humanity, without which men were not to be regarded as men, nor allowed to carry on in the midst of men the vocations of human life. These capacities seem to be threefold, rising in the scale of dignity one above another. The first is, the capacity of knowing and understanding the properties of those things which we see, and handle, and taste, and in the midst of which we are to pass our life; that is, the knowledge of nature as it is submitted to our five senses, and can be discovered, examined, and discoursed of by our understanding, which judgeth by the sense, and taketh means to an end. The second is, the capacity of knowing and understanding our ownselves, of judging amongst, and rightly regulating, those thoughts and emotions of the soul which command the actions of the body, direct the observations of the senses, instruct the understanding to labour in this or that province of outward nature; the capacity which unites us in families, in friendships, and in societies, enacts laws and forms of government, submits to them when they are enacted; and, in short, produces all that inward activity of spirit, and outward condition of life, which distinguishes man from the lower creatures. The third is, the power of knowing, and worshipping, and obeying the true God; which, though it be a faculty lost and hidden in man by the Fall, is now renewed in him by the Word and Spirit of God, whereof assurance is given to all who believe the gospel, by the blessed sacrament of baptism, which declares, not by words but by signs, that from the earliest hour of life, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost implant the lost capacity of divine and spiritual life, which thenceforth education may consider as the third and noblest province of her kingdom. Now that education is liberal, catholic, and complete which embraceth this threefold capacity of human nature, and ordereth itself in such wise as to give to each its proper place in the scale of dignity; and that again is narrow and sectarian, and hurtful, which embraceth only a part, or disordereth the relative dignity and subserviency of the several parts.

Two questions may here be started—whether man hath these three capacities of physical, moral, and religious education, and whether this is the proper order of their dignity

Nor is it to be expected that we should have a universal consent upon this subject, seeing there be some wretches who teach that man differeth only from the brutes in having a better constitution of senses, and who reject all his moral and religious distinctions, as the imagination of the superstitious, or the deceptions of the cunning. But, setting these aside, who are generally of such a degraded type of man, as not worthy to be heard in any court holden upon man's proper dignity, we have, for the proof of this second division of man's capacities, the universal consent of all the wise and virtuous, who have held self-knowledge far more important than natural knowledge, and self-command far more excellent than command over the most hidden secrets of the three kingdoms of nature. We have also the whole body of civil history, which is the narrative of the moral being of man: we have the whole body of law, the many forms of government, the world of his imagination, the infinitely various records of his feelings, his discourses skilfully framed to move the feelings of others, the books of morals and of metaphysics; and, in short, every form of literature holds of man's moral being, save books of natural science and natural history, which, though they have made a great noise in the world of late, and in a manner deafened its ear, are to the books which record the phenomena of man's peculiar and moral being, as the small tithe of poultry and of garden stuffs are to the exuberance of the whole earth. And, with respect to the reality and dignity of the third capacity, our capacity of divine knowledge, it is real and it is dignified only to him who believeth in the revelation of God; and to him who believeth not, it is but a shadow, and an ineffectual doctrine. For the religion that is called natural, I consider but as a higher form of morals, and not entitled to any separate consideration; but the religion which is called revealed, is so high and noble in its beginnings, so infinite in its ends, so real in its discoveries, so full of peace and joy and blessedness, to our moral being, that to one who knows it, and believes it, it is not necessary to exalt its pre-eminence over the other two; and to one who knows it not, this is not the time to enter into the controversy, and hardly the place, seeing I understand myself to be discoursing

before the believers and disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, who have come hither to be instructed in His faith and discipline.

But a matter of such vast practical importance as education should not be allowed to rest upon any individual's notion of the capacities of the human mind, or to be conducted according to any private judgment concerning the ends and objects of human life. And I reckon that the more novel and original any scheme is, which has education for its object, the less worthy it is of our regard. For, of a thing so common, so ancient, so full of anxiety to every one, and so full likewise of reflection to every one, men must surely by this time have got to know the first principles, and to practise the best rules. Therefore, I were willing to renounce both the classification which hath been given above, of the capacities of our nature, and the order of their respective dignity, if it should be found not to have received the common consent of men, or be not embodied in their practice, and required by their institutions. But when I see that in every well-ordered family, the first lesson of a mother to her children is of God and of conscience, of religion and of duty, and that almost all schools, academies, and universities of any standing, have heretofore generally arisen out of religion, and been so ordered as to cultivate both the knowledge and the practice of religion; and that in all well-constituted states, religion hath had the first place and highest reverence, orders of men being set apart to teach it as the principle of action, the root and stem of manly character; and that, in the forms of our country, thereon rest the sanction of an oath, the sacredness of a covenant, the forms of law, the very forms of merchandise, the holy bond of matrimony, the qualification for an office, and everything, in short, which constitutes the nerve and sinew of the state; I must not only keep the place which I have taken for religion, above every other capacity of man, but call upon him who disputes it to enter into controversy with the universal judgment of those chosen men who have stamped the image of their mind upon the face of law and the constitutions of civil life. And that the moral duties of man to man come second in order, and rise far above the knowledge and man-

agement of the material world, who will dispute that comprehendeth ought of his own, of his neighbours, or the common weal, which are not built up, as they fondly imagine, by contributions of physical science, and skill in arts, but by domestic and homely virtues, by female chastity and grace, by manly wisdom and virtue, by the good and wholesome administration of laws, by moderation and disinterestedness in those who govern, by industry, freedom, and loyalty in those who are governed, and by the other forms of moral character, whereof it would be endless to speak particularly. We live, indeed, in a time when the physical sciences have almost stormed the strongholds of morality and religion ; but I trust in God, though at times I fear, that His blessing upon the ancient bulwarks of our Church, and our polity, will preserve them against the bravadoes of physical knowledge, and the rude attacks of physical force. But if any one will ascend beyond thirty short years of time, and take the judgment of the centuries and ages which preceded this present generation of men, he will find, that by universal consent the studies of nature were far postponed to the studies of man and the study of God, and the command over nature's secrets rated far beneath the command over self, and obedience to the holy, just, and good ordinances of the Most High.

We have therefore the best right to conclude, that if education fulfil the rudimental idea which it names, and, indeed, the only catholic idea of it which can be taken up, it must address itself to unfold these three various parts of man's nature, in due subordination to one another, by all the helps and instruments which can be made subservient to that blessed end. Now all who believe in revealed religion, and have had any experience of its godly fruits, know well how utterly ineffectual is every other means to quicken religious life within the soul, save the revelation of His mind and will, which for that end God himself hath given to the children of men. The gospel of Christ, as it is unfolded there, in all its various forms of narration, of doctrine, of precept, and of example, of promise and reward, and of prophecy and fulfilment, through four thousand years of time, is the only light which availeth to dispel the brooding darkness wherein the spirits of all the

young and old are found involved, and hidden from all knowledge which concerneth God and immortality, the invisible world, and everlasting life. They have written most beautifully concerning the light of nature, and the revelation of God contained in the material universe; and very pleasant it were to believe all which they have beautifully written; but I have yet to find the man, either in the records of well-authenticated history, or in the circles of living society, who hath derived from that source any abiding consciousness of God's existence or revelation of His mind, any deliverance from sin or practical government of life, any well-grounded hope of immortality, any available consolation against affliction and death. Yet I blot not out of the scheme these the handiworks of God; but before they can be rightly perused I exact much previous knowledge concerning Him whom they do but dimly represent, and concerning that sad calamity of the world which hath shifted every one of them from its centre; and then with such illumination both human nature and physical nature may be perused with much theological profit and instruction, which without it are a chaos of confusion, a book of riddles, a chain of paradoxes, and series of contradictions. That seminary of education, therefore, from which the Scriptures are excluded, wherein the doctrines and the precepts of the Scriptures are not constantly inculcated, and in Scripture-wise commended to the heart and conscience of the youth, is to be accounted a place for neglecting man's best and noblest, his everlasting capacity; for crushing to the earth that immortal spirit which should have soared to heaven; for extinguishing and annihilating that divine spark which the Son of God came to kindle anew in every heart, and which the Spirit of God abideth for ever to watch over, and to nourish and preserve for everlasting.

With respect to that second form and degree of our capacities which hath reference to the knowledge of our own intellectual and moral nature, gives us the command of the various feelings and affections lying in such disarray within our breast, and prepares us for discharging aright the various offices and duties we owe to ourselves, our neighbours, our kindred, and our country, and whereon personal happiness

and the common weal chiefly depend; this faculty we Christians are of opinion is best cultivated by the knowledge of God, whose revelation, by universal consent even of its enemies, contains the best code of moral duties the world hath ever possessed. And we would have the authority of God employed to support that which the wisdom of God hath devised; and therefore we think, that in a well-conducted education, the knowledge of ourselves should come out of the knowledge of God, which is set forth, not in the abstract, but in relation to human nature; and morals grow out of religion, as the branches, and leaves, and flowers, and fruits, grow from the root and trunk of the tree. And I see not, indeed, how in a Christian state like Britain, where every moral and political duty is entwined with religion, in the very texture of society; where our poetry, and our literature, and our philosophy, heretofore delighted to graft themselves upon the same venerable stem, and since they separated have produced nothing but sour, bitter, and poisonous grapes; and where, Sabbath after Sabbath, moral duties are inculcated on religious principles in our churches, and in our universities, and in our chief schools, and in the great body of our common schools; —I see not how in this land, morals can be taught apart from Christianity, founded upon classical traditions, or modern infidel doctrines, without distracting the very vitals of the land, and tearing to pieces that constitution of society which hath shewn its soundness by weathering the storms which have strewed the world with the wrecks of other states. But on whatever founded, a system of moral duties of some kind ought to be exhibited, and enforced in every school, else will that second part of human nature which is the bond and blessing of society be left dormant as well as the first, and nothing be cultivated of the noble being of man, save those lowest and meanest powers whereby he converseth with the properties of matter, or with the brutes that perish.

The common answer which is given to such an analysis of the powers of man as is given above, and to our definition of education thence derived, is an impatient and violent assertion that knowledge can at all events do a man no hurt, and will only bring him so much the nearer to morals and to re-

ligion. Whence they blindly conclude, that, give the people knowledge of any kind whatever, you may leave the issue to God and a good conscience. To this fallacy, it seemeth to me that our intellectual divines have given great encouragement, by talking as if religion would come of course from the knowledge of the Bible. "Give us the Bible, and it will do its own work," is the watchword of the religious; as if the book were God, and to read were the whole function of a soul; as if God had concentrated Himself in a book, and left the field of operation wholly in its hand. This gross error on the part of the religious hath given such encouragement to the liberal part of the nation, that they speak of it as a thing never to be doubted, that knowledge of any kind must be favourable to religion, must bring the people a step nearer to God, and make them a degree more apt to the operation of the Holy Spirit, so much the more trustworthy, so much the more obedient to law and government. And if you begin to interpose any conditions concerning the subject of the instruction, and the materials of the knowledge, they snuff at it as the most intolerable bigotry, or the most unaccountable blindness: against which I solemnly protest, as a most gross error and dangerous fallacy, and take leave to state my broad and firm conviction, that the natural mind in a state of grossest darkness, and the natural mind in a state of greatest illumination, and in all and every state between these two extremes, is enmity, bitter enmity, to God's mind and will, and utterly unable of itself to receive God's word; that there doth most frequently attend upon the acquisition of knowledge, as upon the acquisition of anything else, a proud consciousness of power, a selfish feeling of distinction, and the vulgar avarice of possessing more, with vanity, jealousy, and presumption, and other vicious feelings, holding of pride and avarice, which cause it to be experienced that the steps and degrees in the invisible kingdom of mind, like the steps and degres in the visible kingdom of rank and worldly state, are often so many removes away from the humility, sincerity, and child-like simplicity of the spiritual temple; into which you enter neither through the stately porch of the academy, nor through the unfolded portals of

the palace, but by the narrow way and strait gate of repentance and self-abasement, which there be few of any rank that find; but certainly fewest of those who are wise after the wisdom of the present world. So that if a palace, the high place of visible power, be generally the stronghold of falsehood, intrigue, and sensuality, then a university, the high place of invisible power, is generally the stronghold of indifference, hatred, and contempt towards the humbling truths of the gospel, and all well-grounded morals; either a focus of most hot and violent rage against spiritual religion, or an iceberg of cold indifference, concentrating death within itself, and radiating chilling cold to the region round about. Having uttered this our conviction with respect to knowledge of the nature of things, taken separately from the law of conscience, which is morality and the obligation of God's revealed will,—namely, that the carnal mind, with all its works, is enmity against God, and that knowledge of itself puffeth up, and cannot build up, but by the addition of the strong band of charity or Christian love, when the cold moonbeam of knowledge is converted into the cherishing sunbeam of wisdom,—I were content to rest here, but that there hath started up in this unprincipled and changeable generation, a class of objectors of a very peculiar kind, who, with much affectation of good nature, allow all that hath been said, yea, become all at once very puritanical, and with an earnest countenance exclaim, "Oh yes! there can be no doubt religion is a most necessary part of instruction; but it is too important, it is too sacred, to be left in the hands of any teacher, and must be remitted to the parents; for it is so sacred, that people are jealous of it, and cannot agree to confide it to any single man or body of men. The best way, therefore, you can take, and the most respectful, is to exclude it from the public schools altogether." Now, I have resolved to give this objection a fair hearing, and try it thoroughly.

First, I must begin by saying, that our mutual jealousies of one another hath deserved this clever retort of the liberal party against us: and that it is a most sad and humiliating proof of the narrow and sectarian spirit which still rules and reigns beneath the outward garb of charity, that so favourable

an ear should be given to so wicked a conclusion as that the principles of revelation are to be excluded from the schools which have an eye to the great body of the rising generation. How it hath come to pass that now, for the first time in the history of nations professing Christianity, it should be deemed impossible to organise any method of teaching it that shall be acceptable to all, and be thought better to forego it altogether, is to me utterly unaccountable upon any other principle than this: that the love, and reverence, and pertinacious adherence which we have to our several peculiarities, is become greater than the love and reverence which we owe to our community of belief and practice. At the Reformation they found no difficulty in this matter, but easily coalesced, notwithstanding their differences upon the subject of religion; and, accordingly, all schools then founded had a special eye to the cultivation of the mind and character by means of religion. And yet the creeds, and catechisms, and other formularies of the Church have received no material change—in this country, no change at all—since that time. Either, then, they were not so well informed on the subject of religion, and less careful of its purity then than we now are,—which I think nobody will dare to allege,—or we are become more attached to particular dogmas and minute distinctions than they were, in our excessive jealousy of which we are willing to forego the advantage of any national system of education which shall contain religion as a constant and essential part. I have oft protested before the Christian Church, that we are more closely entrenched in our sectarian peculiarities than ever; and I give this as the sufficient proof of it, that though many attempts have been made to give us an all-embracing system of schools, which should contain religion as a capital object, it hath always failed through the unwillingness of one party to trust their children to the tutoring of the other. And in the midst of our sectarian contentions, the enemy of our religion hath come in with his sophistical and poisonous principle: "Oh yes! religion is too sacred a matter to be trusted to the public teachers: therefore, in all our schemes for education, let us agree upon the reverend and most respectful exclusion of it altogether."

But a great inheritance is not to be lost because the two

sharers of it cannot agree upon its division; no more are our children to be escheated to the prince of darkness because we are not agreed upon the best way of investing the Prince of Light in their possession: at least, I for one will lift up my protest against so gross a fraud committed upon God's right in them, and their right in the gospel, as this false principle involves, and that for the gravest reasons.

Because, in a Christian land like ours, all things are acknowledged to be God's: and from the king upon the throne, unto his meanest subject, all hold their tenement of place and power, their talents and opportunities, as stewards in Christ's household. The king supreme being as much Christ's vicegerent with respect to government, as the minister of the gospel is His witness with respect to holiness; all magistracy, with all authority of law and political institutions, being as much the responsible institution of God for the administration of natural justice and the protection of religion, as the Church is His responsible institution for the maintenance of the gospel. So that if it be true in law that all property is held of and under the king, it is true in divinity that the king and all other constituted authorities hold their power of and under God. For this is the fundamental principle of the Christian religion, that the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, which Christ hath purchased from under the curse by the sacrifice of Himself; that He is now become the Prince of the kings of the earth, sitteth amongst the gods, and doth with them according to His will. And wherever the Christian religion is acknowledged, this, which is one of its first principles, must be acknowledged; and is acknowledged in our land, notwithstanding the modern maxim that all power originates from the people, and is for the people held. But the true constitutional maxim of a Christian state is, that all power descends from Christ, and is held for the interests of His Church and the promotion of the gospel; as was often said to the Jews,—"The land is not yours, but the land is mine, saith the Lord of hosts." Now, if it be true of all the goods, properties, rights, and possessions of our several estates, that they are to be held of God, and for His Son's kingdom to be administered, how much more is it true of that

possession of possessions, the immortal souls of our children; any single one of which is more valuable than the world and all that it contains: for which souls the world was created to be their material abode, for the redemption of which Christ died; and for their safe conduct through the wilderness, hath both established civil polity and constituted a Church.

Nay, but that His right in the souls of children might be established beyond all question and dispute, He hath established the sacrament of baptism, whereby at any the most tender age, might be solemnly signified His redemption of them from the natural inheritance of death, into the inheritance of life spiritual and eternal, by the power of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. So that I do understand, and most surely believe, that every parent doth in the mystery of baptism, as it were, forestal the death and burial of his child, signifying that to be the end of all he can give it; while Christ doth foreshew the birth of the child into an eternal life, which shall come in course of faith: so that there is a virtual transfer of the little one from a natural birthright of death, into a spiritual birthright of life, and a willing dedication of it to Christ, from whom it hath this infinite bequest, together with the renunciation of any further right in it save as Christ's steward for the due rearing up of the nonage and incompetency of the spirit, which is thus signified to be born. Such are the parents of children, in the eye of Christ and His Church, constituted in solemn trust over the spirits for which Christ died, and which He hath claimed as His own to save and endow them with everlasting life. And what, again, is the teacher of children? A sub-agent, if I may so speak, upon this most excellent trust; one who is fitted, and prepared, and selected for doing that office which parents by their much occupation and business do oft disqualify themselves from doing. Not that I think any parent can deliver himself from his Christian obligations, by rolling them upon one or upon many teachers; but that it is lawful to take help in that which they themselves are not qualified to perform. But still, a school under a schoolmaster, and pupils under a preceptor, are, in the eye of God and of the Church, which is the proper guardian of God's children, nothing different from

a help and supplement to the families from whom the children are drawn. The pupils are still immortal spirits, as children of Christ to be trained for His kingdom. The father cannot undo the surrender which he made of his child at baptism, or annul the obligation which he took upon himself to fulfil the stewardship of its immortality. The teacher cannot step between the father and God, to take upon himself a part, or in any way to counteract the tenor, thereof. He can only offer himself to help in the fulfilment of the covenant; and, in all his actings, must conform to the spirit and intention of the baptismal covenant. He is not a third party, but called in by one of the two parties to help him in his onerous charge; and this I conceive to be the true doctrine of the preceptor's office.

Hence it is, that in the primitive Church this office was given in charge to catechists, who were approved of the Church, and acted under the careful superintendence of the bishops and elders of the Church. And hence also, in the parish schools of Scotland, the teacher is also looked upon as an ecclesiastical person, being judged of by the Presbytery, and visited by the Presbytery; generally also precentor and session-clerk, and often, when of sufficient experience, an elder likewise. Hence, moreover, in all the parish schools, the Scriptures were made the means and the end of instruction, and catechisms introduced only for teaching, in the way best suited to the young, the principles of religious knowledge. Hence also, all universities in Europe were likewise ecclesiastical foundations, conducted for the most part by the doctors of the Church, according to the principle that the education of Christian children was to be undertaken and carried on in the spirit of the baptismal covenant, for the end of training up the spirit to that immortal inheritance which Christ declared Himself to have purchased for it in the sacrament of baptism.

Now, either you must annul me the baptismal covenant, and destroy the fundamental principle of the gospel, that our life, and all we fondly call our own, are purchased by Christ's death, and restored to us, not in full possession, but in stewardship; or you must yield to me, from the above premises, that everything in the school, as everything in the family,

which is taught and done to the children, should be taught and done under the authority of Christ and the auspices of His Church, and with a view to immortality. Is it the art of reading? then for the end of knowing God's will, as it is written in His Word, and in the writings of His wise and worthy servants. Is it the art of writing? then for the end of recording and communicating whatever may be for our greater weal, or the greater weal of others His creatures. Is it the art and mystery of any profession? then for the end of filling to God's contentment the duties of the same. Is it the mechanical handicrafts? then for the end of winning honest bread, and being burdensome to none, but helpful to all. And for whatever other attainment or accomplishment of body and of mind it is that we go to school, then for the end of occupying that endowment of God the better in His service, and the more profitably to His creatures. Now, it is manifest, that in thus fulfilling the particulars of Christian education, you proceed at every step in the distinct recognition of God's propriety in the youth, of His glory as the chief end of their life, of the Church of Christ as their appointed station, and of the Word of God as the principle of all doctrine and the rule of all life, and eternity as the landing-place of the voyage; for which voyage into the haven of eternity, all the education, whether of the family or of the school, is but, as it were, the rigging and the outfit of the vessel, and the consignment of her treasure unto the rightful owner, the Father of the spirits of all flesh.

This late-sprung idea, therefore, of having any art or science pertaining to the mind or body of youth taught apart from and independent of religion, is manifestly not only an unchristian but an antichristian idea, which gives up the false principle that there are talents and gifts which are not to be acknowledged as of God, and may be used without any view to His service; and that men may innocently teach departments of human knowledge without any allusion to the Fountain of light, and our children may, without harm, be taught the same after that ungodly fashion. Now, I say, if there be antichristian, if there be atheistical doctrine, it is this; and if there be a practice which will beget scepticism and unbelief,

it is this. And to this may be traced that almost universal scepticism which is entwined with knowledge, and seated in our schools of knowledge, until it seemeth to be almost inseparable from them.

Be it observed, therefore, that the point for which we argue is not whether religion should be taught in the school or in the family, but whether, in a land professing to be governed on Christian principles, and to establish the Christian religion amongst its people, it be not a glaring inconsistency, a gross solecism in law, and so far forth the entire rejection of religion, that the schools where the youth are taught should not recognise the authority of God and advancement of Christ's kingdom, as constantly and unequivocally as the churches, chapels, or conventicles where the men are taught. I am not dividing the matter of religious education between the home and the school, between the parents and the teachers, but shewing that it is beyond the power of a Christian parent to entrust the training of the spirit entrusted to him, to any one who is unprincipled in Christ's gospel, and uncareful of its obligations: even as it is likewise beyond the power of a Christian government to constitute schools which shall not acknowledge, in the ordering of knowledge and the instructing of mind, the same authority of Christ, the universal Governor, which every Christian polity should acknowledge in all its acts and ordinances. When I say beyond the power of the Christian parent, I mean inconsistent with the baptismal covenant, by which he bound himself; and when I say beyond the power of a Christian government, I mean inconsistent with the covenant which it enters into with Christ, when, for the benefit of His laws and ordinances, and Word and Spirit, it doth acknowledge Him as Lord of all, and expect the blessings of His good providence, which are on this condition bestowed upon every state. They may, both parents and governors, violate the one covenant and the other, yea, and do so continually; but they do it at the risk of offending God, to whom they have devoted their children and their people,—of calling down His judgments in due time, and, if they repent not, of being finally cast off as apostates, and long enduring His wrath and indignation in every form; as

at this day you see in the case of the apostate Jews, the apostate Mohammedans, and the apostate Papacy, which are every one of them blighted with the stern and constant east wind of the wrath of God. Whereas, we who do, amidst our manifold errors and contradictions daily increasing, maintain the national and parental covenant in a certain measure of force, have been preserved and blessed in a wonderful manner, yet nothing to what we would have been, had we kept the covenants of our fathers, and not worshipped the gods of silver and gold, adored the gods of our own reason, and paid a certain respect to the gods of the nations; from whence have come corrosion in the strong and lusty limbs of the body politic, corruption near the heart, confusion in the head, and alarm and dismay throughout the whole, though no man can tell his neighbour why or wherefore. Oh that my country would fear God! Oh that all the people would agree to praise Him! Then would the earth yield her increase, and God, even our God, would bless us.

I take it, therefore, to be established upon broad doctrinal principles, that it is a solecism in a Christian government to authorise, and in Christian parents to patronise, any school for youth, be the subject taught in it what it may, when that subject is not taught with a view to the glory of God, the eternal salvation of the soul, and the Christian well-being of the land. Now, if any one say, "Oh, but we cannot trust the religion of our children to be under the tuition of those whom the Church and State," or, as it should rather be said, whom the believing nation, "hath approved for that end;" the answer is, No one obligeth thee to delegate thy child's education to any one: it is thine own act to do so. Thou art the guardian of the spirit of thy child: do that which seemeth unto thee good. But do not thou hinder others from having the advantage which they may need: neither do thou set up such an anomaly and solecism in a Christian land as education without the acknowledgment of God's propriety in the bodies and minds of the children, who are His creatures, and by baptism His redeemed creatures. And if a sectarian spirit amongst religionists hinder their union in this matter, it is not to hinder a Christian government from fulfilling its duties

unto the Lord, by providing Christian education for the children of the people, take advantage of it who will, and lose the advantage who will. And that spirit, therefore, which is said and sung in so many various forms, "Oh, yes! but religion is too sacred a thing to be meddled with,—men's minds are so diverse in it; therefore leave it to every family apart," is both a foolish and a wicked speech: foolish as contravening all sound doctrine of Christian government and education, and wicked as encouraging that sectarianism and schism among the professors of the same faith, which, if it exist, ought to be blamed, not commended; discouraged and wrought out, not encouraged and engrained into the people. It is certainly an evil; for our religion is community and love, and the Church is a brotherhood, not a diversity of parties. The spirit is, moreover, a poor subterfuge for ignorant indolence in divining good measures, or for malicious dislike to religion altogether. What would they say if any one were to retort upon them, "That political economy is so uncertain a thing, and men are so divided upon it, hardly two agreeing in any question,—it may be of the currency, or the corn laws, or the silk trade,—that the government had better leave it altogether at once, and follow in the course of ancient customs?" Or, again, when any bill is presented before the legislature upon which there are various separate interests manifested, it ought uniformly to be cast out until they can all agree. Thou fool! it is this disagreement in matters which makes government necessary; and a good government is, as it were, a great mediator of peace to the people, and therefore every government is properly the handmaiden of the eternal Mediator and Redeemer.

Now, while I thus argue the utter incongruity of an unchristian school in a Christian community, and maintain it to be an anomaly which was never named in the land until the light of the last thirty years darkened all former knowledge, and put to shame all former wisdom, I am careful not to exaggerate the influence of the school in teaching religion or anything else which pertains to the true nobility and excellent character of men; but do maintain that it is one of the great prejudices of this day, both in the Church and in the

world, to have infinitely exaggerated the power of abecedarian knowledge upon the heart, strength, mind, and soul of men. But this is too great a subject to enter upon at present; and I do therefore now proceed to judge by the principle which I have laid down of education as it ought to be, concerning that education of the people which of late hath drawn so much attention, and is really so important an element in the great question of the world's future prospects.

II. These observations which we have made in general upon the scope and end of education, do open the way to a practical judgment concerning that kind of education which now engageth the universal attention of the people. In handling this, the second head of our discourse, I have an eye chiefly to those inventions and practices of education which have grown up with the last half century, and which profess to follow knowledge on its own account, without respect to any particular creed of religion, or system of morals. At the head of which I may place our mechanical schools, and the university which it is proposed to found in the metropolis. I confess, however illiberal and irreligious I may be thought, my observations will apply very largely also to those systems of education which admit the Bible, but exclude every creed, and prevent any effective exposition or application of the truths of the Bible; which build chiefly upon the acquisitions of reading, writing, and accounts; and adopt the Bible and lessons from the Bible as the least exceptionable class-book for learning to read upon. And while I include these modern institutions, of which the basis is knowledge and arts on their own account, I exclude all the ancient institutions, from the parish schools of Scotland up to the universities of England, which have religion for their foundation, and are, as it were, a porch to the Church.

Our notion of human nature, as explained above, is, that it is fashioned and furnished for more excellent purposes than to turn the clod or handle machines, to transport the produce of the earth from place to place, or work in mines of gold and silver; or to eat, drink, and make merry, over the indulgences which are by these means procured. And, therefore, those

systems of education whose chief aim it is to teach the nature of the physical productions of the earth, and the mechanical arts by which they are to be transported from place to place, and the chemical arts by which their forms and properties are changed, and the science of economy, or of turning our handiwork to the most account, are to me no systems of education whatever, unless I could persuade myself that man was merely king of the animals, head labourer and master workman of the earth. I can see a great use and value in these physical sciences, to enable a man to maintain himself with less brutal labour, to the end he may have more leisure upon his hands for higher and nobler occupations; and in this respect I greatly admire them, as having bowed the stubborn neck of the elements to the spirit of man, and restored him that power over creation with which he was endowed at first. But if he is to be taught in his youth no higher occupation than this, no godlike recreation of his soul, no spiritual sciences; and, if what he is taught of intellect be thus bound down, like Prometheus, to the barren earth, then have we an education which, however splendid in its apparatus, however imposing in its experiments, however fruitful in riches, and all which riches can command, is poor and meagre, low, mean, and earthly, altogether insufficient to satisfy man's estate; which doth but harness him for his work, which doth but enslave and enserf him to the soil, but giveth to him no tokens, no hint, nor intimation, of his reasonable being,—for I call not that reason which labours in the clay,—it is but the instinct of the noble animal, and not the reason of the spiritual being. Such education will depress a people out of manliness, out of liberty, out of poetry, and religion, and whatever else hath been the crown of glory around the brows of mankind.

Yet mark, that even to this the lowest form in the school—the education of the instincts of man, which teacheth him to till, and sow, and reap, and gather into barns; to exchange, and truck, and traffic, and make gain—I yield its proper value when I say, it is to the end of making less bodily bondage and earthly calculation necessary to win our bread, and leave the better part of our being disengaged for other employments. But for what employments disengaged? This is the

question you answer not in your mechanical schools; which is their poverty and barrenness. You did not surely mean that your men should always labour, and sleep, and labour. That is not your consummation of humanity: is it? If it be, you are fit to be the instructors of Russian serfs, or West Indian slaves; but not of men who know of old, and have it written in the chronicles of their fathers, that they were born for the highest functions of free-born men; yea, and to aspire unto the similitude of God, and live with God and Christ upon the earth, and live with them for ever in the world to come. This is the quintessence of sectarianism, and yet I believe it is the only notion which nine-tenths of those calling themselves liberal have concerning education. Nevertheless, there is every advantage when the time cometh for the youth to go their several ways, and address themselves to their several occupations and handicrafts in life, that they should then be instructed, not in the routine customs and blind precepts of their trades and professions, but be well grounded in the principles thereof, and see them in their elements, that they may have the pleasure and gratification of understanding what they are about; and of doing their part to improve, and simplify, and perfect the arts of life; nor do I object that they should know the bearings and relations of one department of human industry upon another, to the end they may not degenerate into pieces of mechanism; and then is the time and place for schools of mechanics, to connect art with science, and artizans with scientific men: which institutions being grafted upon the stock of a well-educated and ingenious people, and kept in their proper place, would have the same effect in scientific, manufacturing, and mechanical society which the sympathy of nobles with gentlemen, of gentlemen with yeomanry, and of yeomanry with peasantry, hath in political life. These mechanical instructions are part of a young man's apprenticeship, and should come in when he hath left the school and entered to the shop, and begun to take thought concerning his future livelihood, and the means of his sustenance. But the school of education is for a higher and more liberal tuition, not to educate the craftsman, but to educate the man; not to train for this or that office in the commonwealth, but for all

offices; not to be taken up with that which is peculiar, but with that which is universal. It ought, therefore, to contemplate the common conditions of men, and to prepare them for fulfilling these. This is its first care, which having well discharged, if there be time and leisure for particular and individual things, then can there be no harm in attending to these also; but not by any means at the expense and to the sacrifice of the common and catholic.

Now, forasmuch as letters are the great contrivance by which men have chosen to express their thoughts and feelings, and by which God hath made to man the revelation of His being and will, it is surely first of all necessary that reading should be given to all, as the key by which they are to open to themselves the knowledge of that which is recorded concerning the past, and revealed concerning the future. And to the end that this generation may be able to record unto the generations to come what hath occurred in its days, and that each man may be able to record the series of his own impressions and feelings, or communicate them to whom he pleaseth, so that the intercourse and communion of life may be preserved, there ought to be added, next to the faculty of reading the thoughts of others, the faculty also of recording our own thoughts,—that is, of writing. These are universals which ought to be taught to every man, because every man, whatever his sphere and occupation be, hath the like need of them, and will derive from them much guidance and consolation of his life. And it seems to me, that the poor have the most need of the consolation and sustenance which these two arts afford; inasmuch as their life is more burdened and pressed with incessant toil, with everything to depress them to the earth, and little to elevate them above it, having no facility of moving to and fro, to catch the gales and currents of improvement, to behold the various works of invention, and hear the sentiments which dignify the being of man. The poor who are bound to place, and insphered in the narrow prejudices of place; who have no story, but a few traditions; no wisdom, but a few proverbs; no hope higher than a poorhouse in their old age; no ambition beyond a cottage: these, I say, so far from being excluded, have the best

right to, by having the greatest need of, reading and writing; those two wittiest inventions, and greatest helps of man's condition, whereby the past may be made to pass over again before them, and the future to rise up in its glory under their eyes; the distant may be brought near, the learned made level to their capacities, the good introduced to their cottage firesides, the godly made accessible to their souls, and every admirable and heavenly quality which hath rooted and seeded on the earth made as free and blessed to the cottage as it is to the palace, the senate, and the university. If I might apply a Scripture quotation, less out of place than many Scripture quotations are, I would have it cried from the northern to the southern pole, and from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof,—"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money come buy wine and milk, without money and without price."

But let it be recognised and fairly stated out, lest our enthusiasm carry us too far, that reading is only the key by which the mind of others is directed to us, and writing the key by which our mind is discovered to them; and that the interchange of mind with mind, which these inventions enable us to carry on, may be productive of evil as readily as of good unless there be given therewith some criterion to know the good from the evil. The world of books is wide as the world of man's thoughts and fancies and feelings, full of poisons as well as of food and medicine; whatever hath been felt of good and ill hath been written, and the evil hath its blazoning to the eye as well as the good, its rich garnish and savoury odour to the base appetites of the mind, and needeth not to be sought, but is presented before the face of all the people, cheapened down to their poverty, and pressed upon them with all assiduity. There might have been heretofore a good principle in writing a book, and there might also have been a good principle in publishing one; but now clearly and confessedly gain and profit is the principle which moveth the book mart, as entirely as any other;—especially the production of those leaves which lie on every table, and are offered to the eye in every ale-house of the land. Wherefore, like putting a blind man into a wood where poisons grow as plen-

tifully as fruits, and leaving him there to feed his body, is it to introduce our people to this chaos of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood, of religion and irreligion, of blessedness and misery, of heaven and hell, without having cultivated in them any principles by which to know the evil from the good, and to distinguish the wholesome from the unwholesome. For, let men talk of liberality as they please, no one is so wildly liberal as to say that everything which is written is right, and everything which is circulated amongst the people is good. If any man had the folly to say so, I would go to the place where his children were educated, and see whether indiscriminateness were the order of his nursery; I would sit down at his table, and hear whether indiscriminateness were the order of his discourse. It is absurd. Why are these men so fierce for liberality, why so illiberally liberal, so passionately tolerant, so sarcastically contented with everything? But this matter must be handled in a grave and holy tone of mind: awful interests and awful events depend upon the issue.

We said, that in a school, that which was common to us as men ought to be first attended to, and that which is peculiar to us as craftsmen should be left to the term of our apprenticeship. And therefore we gave reading and writing the first place, because to know another's thoughts, and to communicate our own, is the characteristic of man's distinction as man, the foundation-stone upon which his intellectual and spiritual character is to be reared. We must, therefore, now attend to the goodly fabric of character which is to be built up by this faculty, of which you have given him the ready hold. You have taught him to speak to a distance, and to hear from a distance; now must you teach him what to say, and how to judge what he heareth. That is, you must cultivate those principles within his mind by which trust and honesty, and worth of every kind, are to be distinguished from falsehood and worthlessness. All men have common functions to discharge to one another, even as members of the same society, to obey the laws, to reverence the authorities, to be courteous to one another, and humane to the lower creatures. As members of a family they have still more important offices to discharge—to be dutiful and obedient children, affectionate

kinsmen, faithful spouses, tender and watchful parents. As joined to one another in the relationships of life they have other duties to discharge, of honest traders, good and faithful servants, kind masters, confidential friends, wise governors, and good subjects. Towards ourselves we have a high duty to discharge, which lies at the root of all the others; namely, to separate the good from the evil within our own souls, to cherish the most excellent, and to foster the most kindly parts of our nature, to fight against cruelty and malice, and to subdue anger and impatience, and to watch over the inward and hidden man of the heart, out of which are the issues of life. And towards God we have to fulfil the duties of responsible creatures; nay, more, of men taught from above, of men redeemed from iniquity by the blood of His only-begotten Son, and regenerated by the Holy Ghost in the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness. These are not particulars, but universals, pertaining to us as men, and not as craftsmen, growing out of the root and stem of human nature, and necessary to its well-being, yea, necessary to its very being. And therefore if they be not taught in the school, which is the nursery of the seedlings, where shall they be taught? In the church? The church has enough to do with men, though it should not neglect children. In the house and family? If it were done there, I were content, and would concede the matter. But rest assured, that if it were attempted at home or in the church, it would be found so imperfectly done, that it would be insisted for in the school also. And when it is best done in any one place, I have found it best done in them all. But I say, done it must be. And if any one say done it need not be, I arrest that man of high treason against the royal function of education, which is to draw out the powers and faculties that is in man, and fit him for the duties of the life that now is, and of the life that is to come.

If the faculties of human nature consisted only of five senses, four lusty limbs, and a voracious body; and if the wealth of man consisted only in houses and lands and visible goods; and if the whole functions of men be accomplished in the writing-office, behind the counter, or in the workshop, or in the field, or in the manufactory, then I give in and say,

Let no principles be taught in a school but the principles of Coker to number, and the elements of Euclid to measure withal: but while the old notion lives upon the earth, that there is a spirit in man, and that the breath of the Almighty hath given him life—that there is a world of faith beyond the world of sight, wherein are things honest and true, and pure and lovely, and of good report; and while these old English notions live, that every man's cottage is his castle, which he hath to keep with all his wisdom, and purify with all his religion, and that his children are his quiver of arrows with which he is strong, and can face his enemy in the gate; and that he is a free man to meddle and intermeddle with the governors of the state, and call them to an account according to the laws; and that he is a judge of law and fact, to whom the twelve judges, clothed in ermine, are but servants, to set the case out in fair array;—while these notions live here in the south, and with us in the north, while the still higher notions live the bulwark of the land, that every peasant is a brother of Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth, and every father a priest of Christ over his household, and every head of a family an elder over the house of Israel, our sons born not to vegetate upon the spot of soil which bore them, but to go up and down the earth and open it with their wisdom, and instruct it in their holier discipline, and come home to their mother laden with its treasures, and with what is dearer still to our mother, the report of a good name, and the glory of an upright and righteous man;—while these ideas live amongst our people, and in these our people live, shall a few faithless, witless, sectarian speculators in education—philanthropists not knowing what man is, that they might love him—talk of educating our people without respect to these the high functions of our people, educate them merely in truth mechanical and things visible; then I say, let these speculators go to the people to be a little instructed, before they pretend to instruct the people, who are more wise and noble-minded than they.

Therefore, seeing our people are not regarded as mere serfs of the soil, or adjuncts of the machinery, but men who are the nerves and sinews of the State, who choose lawgivers and judge causes between man and man, between the king and

the subjects; spiritual men who have a priesthood appointed over them, to teach them from Sabbath to Sabbath the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and the obligations which, as Christians, they are under; seeing we are a nation of Christians, a believing nation, who, for the sake of God, and God's righteous cause, have mustered in the field of battle, and triumphed over the upholders of despotism and superstition, yea, have torn the sceptre out of the hands of those who would have ruled us in the spirit of despotism and superstition; shall the children of our people be trained in the ignorance of those principles which their fathers wrote upon the tablets of their hearts, and placed as a frontlet before their eyes, and in which they became a separate people from the rest of the nations, and have not been made partakers of their plagues? No, this must not be, or else the Lord hath utterly forsaken us. If we have a Christian priesthood, and a Christian framework of society, and a Christian statute-book, then must we also have a Christian education, else our children will grow up, not to improve and perfect the works of their fathers, but to fight against and overthrow them; to root out, not to prune the vine and the fig-tree, under the shade of which we have so long sitten without any to make us afraid. When we become an infidel and paracidal people like France, we may bethink us of mere scientific education; but while we are a believing people, we must have an education of principles first, along with our education of knowledge: and if both cannot go together as heretofore, then, I say, let the education of principles stand first, as the palladium of the land, and the education of knowledge learn to bow and reverence that which was before it, and which we prize above it.

They have got the idea into their heads, that if you do but exclude all creeds and peculiarities of religion from our schools, you deliver them from being sectarian, and that it is the acmé of liberality to have no religion taught whatever; as if there were no sectarianism anywhere but in religion; and as if religion consisted only of disputes. The fools, the ignorant fools! Religion is the science of obligations. And an education which should exclude obligations is certainly worse than none; inasmuch as an untamed savage creature who is strong is

worse than one who is weak. Exclude religion from the schools! then must you exclude celestial aspirations from the soul, and heaven-born principles from the life of man. And what have you to harmonise and consociate man with man? Will self-interest cement a state? Yes, it is their present philosophy, that the perfection of all government is to leave men to themselves. They are right, so far as his interests go. There you may leave man to himself. But what is to hinder him from passing beyond the mark of truth? Doth man naturally love the rights of his neighbour as he loveth his own; and having proceeded full march to the outward bound of his own domain, will he stop there without an impediment? But his neighbour will watch that he trespass not. And is this the Utopia of these philosophers, that every man must be a watchman upon every other man; that each is to stand harnessed against all the rest? Yes, truly this is the perfection of their system, that each man should be on the watch against every other man. And where then is love, friendship, fellowship, fraternity? where is hospitality, generosity, magnanimity, and disinterestedness? where self-denial, self-devotedness, and self-sacrifice? "Oh," they answer, "these are fine things to talk about, things that have been written of; but whether they ever existed or not, is a different question: that they exist not at present is a matter certain."

I do admire, and am amazed of what sires we of this age were begotten, and what mothers nursed us upon their knees, that we should have lost the ancient temper of these islanders, who, from the first insight they got into the Christian faith, have held it dear, and always bore it before them in the government and legislation of the land; to adhere to which was regarded as the mark of a liberal mind, and to deliver it from thraldom the highest achievement of a gallant soul;—whose single bishops in the darkest ages, as old Greathead, had the boldness to tear a Pope's bull and trample it under foot; whose scholars, as Wickliffe, would preach their discourses to the people, and face the issue, whatever it might be; by the side of whom our chief men of war, as John of Gaunt, used to stand, ready to defend them to death. I do admire, that a people, whose chief statesmen, as Burleigh and

Bacon; whose chief lawyers, as Sir Matthew Hale; whose chief patriots, as Hampden, and Pym, and Harry Vane; whose chosen spirits, as Milton, and Newton, and Boyle, and Locke, did all count it most worthy of them to rest their improvements upon the purification and enlargement of religion, and never sought in any way its overthrow; well knowing—being master spirits of the mind, not money-changers—that Christian religion is reason perfected, and liberty secured,—that such a people, who by these principles have been made steadfast as old Rome itself, and now wield an empire wider than that of Rome, should have come to this pass of darkness and delusion, that its high-spirited and liberal men, with one voice, should shove Religion to a side, and hold her in abeyance, and taunt her with scorn, and distinguish not between her form and beauty, as upheld in those establishments which our fathers set up, and the grossest superstition which they fought against, as the very incarnation of the devil's falsehood and murder,—that instead of crying for reform of abuses here, as they do in the State, they should rather court an overthrow: Raze, raze it. O God, why hast Thou blinded us? O our God, why hast Thou forsaken us? Why standest Thou afar off from the voice of our weeping? Return unto us, O God! Return unto us, Thou who hast been the strength of our fathers! Deliver us, O Lord! for there is none that fighteth for us but Thou alone.

I thank my God that there is still a remnant amongst us, in whom is the old leaven of this Reformed nation, and who know better things than are taught by late-sprung liberality, (of whom the multitudes are now assembled into this city, to be refreshed with the tidings of Zion's prosperity, and to know each other's hearts, and welcome each other's faces with the smile of brotherhood, and strengthen each other's hands with the faith of that strength which resideth in the sanctuary of God;) to whom I now earnestly call, as to the saviours of their country, against the invading deluge of unprincipled knowledge, and strictly charge them, by the authority given to me in the Church of Christ, that they adopt none of those notions of our modern politicians and philosophers, but labour in the old way of instructing the people in the book of God, and

training the children of the people to love and reverence the rod of their fathers. Have nothing to do with any seminary of youth in which the Holy Scriptures are not recognised, are not honoured, and in which the principles of catholic religion are not inculcated. Make your stand there, and flinch from it on no account. There is no fear that the earthly applications of knowledge will not be attended to by the earthly part of men. But ye are the only watchmen to watch that the heavenly and spiritual applications of knowledge should be attended to. I do not say that you should dissociate the two from each other; but that you should insist they be not dissociated, and see that they be not. And if they cast upon you the charge of illiberality, retort upon them the charge who are illiberal to the memory of their fathers, to the hopes of their children. If they cast upon you the charge of sectarianism, retort upon them the charge. For it is they who make division between the world that is and the world that is to come, between religion and morals, between morals and knowledge, between principles and ends. I would not have you divide from worldly philanthropists; but in the matter of education I would have you to stand for the spiritual interests of the children. And do not receive the plausible pretext, that they will be taught religion at home, or in the church, or in a separate school for that end and that alone. They should be taught religion when they are taught other things; or rather all other things should be taught upon religion and for religion, in order to educe and lead out of the young mind those spiritual powers, those divine capacities which else must slumber, while earthly powers and earthly faculties are getting strength and head, and smothering the seed of spiritual life; for religion should be to the soul what the oak is to the forest, sending its roots deep, deep into the soil, lifting its noble top in fearless majesty, and extending all abroad its branching arms to embrace with its shelter everything which betakes itself thither as a refuge. I pray you, therefore, Christians, in your several spheres, in town or country, here or abroad, not to be put out of countenance by late-sprung notions and theories concerning education; neither to seek to put them out of countenance; but to resolve that, come what

will of them, (and let them have the trial) they shall not banish from the schools in which your children are, or in which you have an influence, that oldest and solidest foundation of personal character, of social well-being, of present and eternal blessedness, the Holy Scriptures. These being preserved, will act as a test and a touch-stone upon those novelties, which, if I were to judge by anything I would judge by this criterion, what influence they have in attracting or withdrawing the minds of the youth to or from the oracles of God, and the principles of the doctrine of Christ. They will call this bigotry in me to set forth; and in you they will call it bigotry to carry into effect. Therefore, I go on to justify the doctrine, by examining the third question proposed: In what hands the superintendence of education might best be left, so as to protect it the most effectually from becoming sectarian; that is, from applying itself only to a fraction of the human mind, and a department of human well-being.

III. There can be no inconsistency, as hath been shewn above, between education and religion, provided they be both free from narrow and sectarian principles, and conducted for the end of opening and directing the faculties of the soul; education to open, and religion to direct them. If I know anything of Christian religion, it is for the learned as necessary as for the unlearned, the same to barbarians and Scythians, bond and free, bringing the method of redemption, and the means of regeneration, which all equally need. And, inasmuch as education draws out the various powers of the intellectual and moral being, it enables us to judge, by the mere tests of that religion which prescribes to them the rules, of their health and salvation. So that there can be no doubt, that the evidence of the Divine origin, and the blessedness of the enjoyments of religion, are heightened to the man of cultivated mind;—just as the face of heaven shews more intelligent to the astronomer, and the face of nature shews more beautiful to the poet, and the face of men more expression to the artist, than to those whose faculties of observation have not been developed. At the same time, there is not so much in this as might at first be imagined; because,

as hath been said above, the true face of religion is not discerned by the eye of the intellect, but by a spiritual faculty which no human teaching can cultivate. Nevertheless, it must be allowed, that if the intellect have not been subjected to vanity or worldliness in our education, and if our moral being have not been submitted to sense or selfishness, that secondary evidence which is brought to nature must be stronger according to the number of the points upon which nature comes in contact with religion. But it is quite possible that education may become sectarian, and thereby fight against religion. It may attend to the mere giving and receiving of impressions of knowledge by words or diagrams, or models and moulds of art; cultivating the intellect and the taste alone, without minding the culture of principles of duty, or the building up of an excellent and manly character. It may aim to prepare man only for the present life, cultivating in him the prudences and addresses by which he is to work his way in the community, without turning his attention to the permanent parts of his nature, or giving him to know of the life which is to come. In which cases, by being sectarian, or addressing only a part of human nature, and that the lowest part, it unfits a man for religion, whose object is to order man according to the scale of the true dignity of his faculties, not according to the scale of their present usefulness. But if education be so conducted as to fulfil the purpose which its name imports, of educing or drawing out the powers and faculties which are in human nature, there can be no doubt that it will qualify us better for serving every end imposed upon us by the revelation of God, which speaks not to the foolish but to the understanding, whose commandments enlighten the eyes, and whose testimonies make wise the simple. It is the part of falsehood and superstition to desire the ignorance and blindness of those whom they delude, to keep their orgies in the twilights of the soul, and to oppose the progress of knowledge amongst the people, for no other reason but because it makes them think and reason; and the priests who do so are the priests of a superstition, and the statesmen who do so are the statesmen of an oligarchy, which standeth in the well-

being of a few, and the detriment of the many. But, on the other hand, it is possible for the spirit of education to be sectarian and narrow-minded, as well as the spirit of religion and the spirit of policy; and, instead of educing and developing all the faculties of human nature, to cultivate only a part, and to be conducted according to a theory, popular in the time and place, instead of being conducted by the old, and constant, and universally admitted principles of our nature. In which case, it may be the duty both of sound religion and of enlightened policy to set themselves against the insufficient and vicious culture of the people; and to insist, not that the people should abide in darkness, but that their minds should be brought wholly and fairly into light. For, if those who educate the youth be not, or the books by which they are educated be not, in harmony with the spirit of religion, and of law, which are established in a country, and still more if they be opposed to it; it must come to pass, sooner or later, that the contrary spirits will manifest themselves, and strive together for the superiority. Give me the schools and the school-books, and in time I shall have both the churches and the courts of law.

Now, as we taught in the opening of the subject, that there are three distinct capacities in man, which it is the object of education to unfold, ascending one above another in the dignity of their object, in their profitableness to the subject, and in their advantage to the commonweal—namely, the knowledge of nature and its various forms of science and art; the knowledge of our own selves, or various powers and relations to one another; and the knowledge of our Creator and His revelation—so now it is to be observed that there are in a community three several powers, which are, as it were, the consecrated guardians of these three great interests, and whose chief office it is to watch over them—namely, private interest, of which each man is the guardian; the public good, of which our governors and lawgivers are the guardians; and religion, of which the priesthood are the guardians. Not but that private interest is, and ought to be, the guardian of all the three; seeing every man is as much interested in law and religion as he is in his private property and

peculiar traffic; but that these two latter departments, being common to all, have been given over to classes of men separated for that end by God, and acknowledged by all people, in order to be the counterpoise to the selfishness of private interest. Now, it will be found, upon close inquiry, that there is the same natural necessity why the superintendence of the schools should, in some measure, be under these three guardians, who take the charge of the commonwealth—namely, private interest, to see that the youth be educated in the knowledge of outward nature; the representatives of law and government, to see that they be educated in the knowledge of their moral and political duties; and the priesthood, above them all, to see that they be educated in the knowledge of God and revelation, which is the highest function of our being. And I will now shew you a little how insufficient any one of these is to take upon itself the high trust of superintending the schools, and saving them from becoming narrow and sectarian.

The experiment of leaving it to private interest to attend to the education of the youth, and giving it no patronage or superintendence of Church or State, hath been tried among the peasantry of England for three centuries; and such is the apathy of an uneducated people, that, till others interfered, they continued as ignorant as they were at the Reformation. And for the last half century it hath been tried in the manufacturing towns amongst a people commonly well supplied not only with the necessaries but with the comforts of life. But such is the power of present gain, that they rather choose to convert their children into ministers to their own extravagance, than part with any of their superfluities to have them instructed. What education does spring up in a country upon this spontaneous principle, must always be of a very inferior kind, just enough to compass the interests which an unenlightened people can discern. And the teachers will also be of an inferior kind, such who will qualify them most readily and most cheaply for those short-sighted and narrow interests. Being wholly dependent upon the people, they cannot be expected to face out any popular prejudice, which they will be the rather disposed to minister to and perpetuate. There is no fellowship of a class or order

to bear their spirit up. They have no standing with the law or the church, to give them importance. They are but servants of the public, and ministers to its pride and pleasure; and they will be found little elevated above the condition of the slaves who anciently were entrusted with the care of the education of the youth. You shall find such masters in the villages of England, meagre in their knowledge, mean in their conditions, and wholly depressed out of the dignity proper to one who is rearing souls for the life that is, and the life that is to come. In Ireland, the condition of such schools is still more miserable, and the books usually taught in them contain superstition and barbarism in their grossest forms. In America, this experiment is making upon a large scale; and although they have central colleges in most of the States for furnishing teachers, I am informed that the system is rapidly bringing the condition of schoolmasters into that of servants, who are hired yearly or half-yearly, and removable at the pleasure of their employers. The principle of supply and demand, which is the idol of these days, will not answer for anything beyond the most coarse and common bodily necessities of man. And being applied to our moral and spiritual necessities, it never faileth to bring them under the dominion of profit and loss. It reduceth every relation to calculations of interest, and makes money, which is but the medium for exchanging visible things, the medium also for the exchange of feeling, and affection, and duty. It hath already gone far to destroy the relation between servant and master, and the respect due from inferior to superior; as hath been well exemplified by the abolition of the combination laws, which hath afforded us an opportunity of seeing what effect this principle of supply and demand hath had in abolishing those finer feelings of gratitude and mutual respect by which society is bound together. If the same experiments were made on education, as the economists recommend, the result would be the same—to destroy the reverence in which the teachers and instructors of youth have in all countries been held, to estimate them according to the profit, not the profitableness, of their instruction, and to bring into an inferior estimation all learning and knowledge which

could not be converted into ready money. Those sciences would be taught which are marketable, and those teachers who fitted our sons most expeditiously for the market-place, would be in the highest repute. But, as for sound principles, enlarged views of duty, true manliness of character, reverence for the laws, and the king, and the authorities under him; piety to God, faithfulness to Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and all the other principles and effects of spiritual life; these would remain unregarded in the choice of schoolmasters, untaught in the schools, and consequently unpractised in the world, and be reputed so many vulgar errors, which every liberal man must renounce in private, and in public respect only so long as the public mind is not sufficiently enlightened to despise them.

Let us next see how this important matter of superintending the schools might be entrusted to the representatives of law and government. In ancient times, when the governors of the State and the legislators were also the moralists and philosophers, who consulted for the well-being of the people, in the largest sense in which they could conceive it, the care and superintendence of the youth might well be entrusted to them. But, in these times, when statesmanship applies itself exclusively to public concerns, and it is considered an infringement on the part of law to meddle with our familiar affairs, which are held sacred to every man, it were totally inconsistent with the division of power that they should take upon them the superintendence of the schools. The magistrates who represent the law in the country parts, and the deputies of government who watch over the peace, would conceive it foreign to their vocation to be burdened with such a charge, and would not be fitted to undertake it. Law and government, amongst the Gothic nations, include a much smaller scope of the private well-being of men, than they did among the classic nations; and there is in the spirit of the people a decided aversion to their taking more upon them than the foreign policy and inward peace of the community. If interest, therefore, be sectarian, and swallow up the higher and nobler desires of the soul, law is still more sectarian, and by its very nature confined to our outward and overt acts;

and therefore is altogether incompetent to take charge of the practical education of the people, so as to select the proper persons, watch over the discipline, judge of the instructions, and give life to the whole interior organisation of the schools. And yet, while I thus exclude both private interest and law as being sectarian and narrow-sphered, I do not wholly exclude either of them. Private interest should have an insight over everything, to take advantage of the schools or not; there should be no compulsion, there should be no bribe of any kind applied to it; it should be left wholly at liberty to make its choice of that which it is not able to prepare, and perhaps not very well able to judge of, but of which, nevertheless, the judgment must not be taken out of its hand, lest evils of a greater magnitude should be introduced. And law should stand to the schools in the same relation in which it doth to other parts of the common good, ready to see that every man fulfilleth his covenant, and dischargeth his office, and, if complaint be made, ready to arbitrate the matter, and see that justice hath its rights. But neither of these two powers in a community are sufficiently enlightened in the character and working of the human spirit, in the fields which it hath for culture, and the chambers which it hath for containing stores, to undertake to superintend the operation of cultivating and storing it.

This can pertain only to religion, which is wide and extensive as the human spirit, and carries its views of human well-being into the eternal as well as the temporal estate; which is soft, and applieth itself with no outward terrors, nor coarse and outward gains, but with the soft appliances of love and affection to every soul, and seeketh to nourish and cherish therein a spirit of holiness, and of wisdom, and of the fear of God, and of the love of men. Our religion hath a special application unto children, and contemplates them as the types of what a man should be with all his strength and understanding about him. Their simplicity, their faith, their affection, their unworldliness, do all combine to make the human spirit, in its infancy and childhood, the object of its beloved care. And when any mother shews a care of her children, and acquires a power over them, you shall always

find that religion is the instrument by which she is working upon them. Indeed I see not how any education, properly so called, can proceed without religion; because, though you may teach the lesson, how are you to enforce the lesson? The fear of school discipline is, to the finer parts of education, what the fear of law is to the finer parts of society, never touching, never reaching them. There must be an unnoticed discipline, an invisible Master, who is prevailing by His gracious influences over the unnoticed and invisible workings of the soul within. Lessons of knowledge you may teach without the help of this inward Minister, but lessons of morality, lessons of honour, lessons of truth and piety, lessons of manly and noble character, you never shall be able to teach. Do your best, unless you take religion to your aid, you shall but build the outward walls, and rough-cast your house, but you shall never get within its threshold to furnish its interior, or direct the operations, or preserve the peace and blessedness of the household. Religion is, therefore, by its very nature the mistress and superintendent of education. It is wide as its occasions, and profitable to them all; full of helpful ministry, gracious encouragement, and assurance of reward. Therefore it hath come to pass in all the Gothic nations, and it was so among the ancient Britons, that the superintendence of education hath been left to the guardians of religion. In all Christian countries it hath been so, and in the primitive Church, the rearing up of the catechumens was as great a care of the priest as the edification of the members of Christ; and all the universities of Europe have been conducted by priests, and still the greater part of them are so conducted; and we owe the preservation of all our learning to the priests. And though now the spirit of infidelity is beginning to work strange revolutions in the seminaries of learning, it is only a recent innovation, whereof no materials for judging are yet properly before us; but if we may judge from what hath passed around us, we will surely conclude, that a knowledge dissevered from religion, and serving no ends of religion, will serve no ends of social nor private well-being; and though it may increase individual power, and bring a short-lived harvest of individual and national vanity, and

obtain command over the visible universe, and accumulate riches thence, it worketh not in the spirit, nor upon the spirit; brings it no redemption, affords to it no consolation, lays over it no sweet restraints of love, nor strong obligations of duty, —makes no provision for the sorrows, and troubles, and adversities of the soul, and hath no tendency to dignify and ennoble the mind in its high places, nor build up society in any of its strongholds. It is education resting upon religion, and superintended by religion, which hath made us what we are; and let us beware of divorcing these two helpsmeet for one another, lest we become like other nations where they are divorced.

But what if the ministers of religion themselves become sectarian, and make religion the handmaiden of ignorance, of tyranny, and superstition? Are they to be continued in the education of our youth? No, nor yet in the education of our men. They will spoil our men as much as they will spoil our youth. What is to be done? The remedy is to be found in the judicious combination of the other two powers to watch, each one for itself, that the children be not oppressed by priestly authority, nor spirited away by superstition, from the right cultivation of the knowledge of the natural and the moral worlds. The choice of the teacher should not depend upon them alone, but upon a power made up of all the three guardian powers, and at all times the liberty of withdrawing the youth should be in the hands of the parents, and the examination of the schools should be open to the public eye, and the neglect of duty should be under the cognizance of the law. And thus, while the priesthood, as the most sacred and catholic office, and the proper guardian of that which is the root of morals, and the check of private selfishness, and the highest function of humanity, ought to have devolved upon it the constant and careful superintendence of the schools,—there ought to be those checks and safeguards from the others, in the day that it shall become selfish and sectarian, fanatical or superstitious; to prevent it from carrying the schools, which are the nurseries of the State, along with it into the same fearful alienation from whatever is profitable and helpful in natural knowledge to man's estate, from whatever is prosperous and blessed to his soul,

in the chaste, and enlightened, and wholesome intercourse of life.

If a case were wanted to confirm the doctrine of this discourse in all its parts, that case would be found in Scotland, where for three centuries there has been a religious, and nothing but a religious, education of the people; for our universities were but a part of our religious establishment, where the schools have been wholly under the superintendence of the clergy, with those checks of private interest and public good which have been described above; and the result hath been, not only to educate, but to unite the country as one great family. Our love to one another, which they admire, and sometimes blame, in foreign parts, is only one form of the union which is made in our souls by the commonness of our early instruction and early habits. All classes of the community sit down upon the same forms, undergo the same tuition, are taught the same principles, and subjected to the same discipline. Rarely are there any prizes for emulation; rarely any rewards of merit, except those inward rewards to which we are taught to look; we have no scholarships, hardly any bursaries,—no fellowships, hardly any foundations, to whip and spur our education on; but, instead, we have the sweet incitements of knowledge, and the strong motives of duty, and the ever-abiding sentiment of religion. Take away the religious superintendence of our parish schools, and you take away the grave parochial importance of our schoolmasters; whose dignity before the people is not from their wealth, for they are generally very poor, but from their station, their trust, their sacred and religious trust, of the education of the children. The schoolmaster is a parish dignitary, not a money-making craftsman. He is looked up to with respect by the highest in the parishes; and by the people he is treated with a reverence, second only to that with which they treat their minister. Take from him this hold which he hath upon the spiritual and religious feelings of the people, and you will not restore him to the same place, though you should give him thousands by the year;—money is a corrupter; it is principle that ennobles. Money rusts and tarnishes the present lustre of a character, but religion makes it shine

resplendent. That is the true nobility which springs from what is not seen and cannot be calculated.

IV. Now you know, my dear brethren, that in the Highlands and the Islands of Scotland there are parishes extending over wide mountain tracts, intersected with arms of the sea, and often divided into separate parts by the ocean, so that the minister hath to pass by boats from one part of his parish to another. These parishes have but the provision of one parish school, like the rest, which being stationary, sheds its influence only over the place in its neighbourhood. The Scotch, even of the low countries and the borders, are not slack to venture far to school, as I know well; many of my class-fellows being wont to travel six and seven miles to the school, and as many to their home, every day, with their flask of milk upon their shoulder, and their morsel of dry bread in their pocket. But when parishes are thirty, forty, and even fifty miles in extent, with no highways nor byways, across heathy mountains and misty lakes, this is impossible; and yet these Celtic people are a gallant people, who have played their part right well in the struggles of the country; whose martial dress hath waved triumphant over many a hard-fought field; whose quietness and peaceableness at home cost the country little for justice or police; whose religion is their chief wealth and consolation. To the help of these brave and worthy men their brethren of the south have resolved to come, and to bring it in that which they prize most, and most do need—in education. And to that end this ancient society, incorporated by royal charter, hath laboured for more than a century, by schoolmasters to teach, and missionaries to preach, in the remote and unvisited districts; and now, by the happy invention of circulating schools, which move quarterly from place to place, they hope to be able to bring in sufficient help. These schools are under the clergy, like other schools, and are regularly examined by the presbytery of the bounds, whose reports are regularly published. Now, my brethren, you know the advantages of a religious education, or, if haply ye know them not, ye lament the want of it. Extend your liberality

to others: they are your countrymen; they are haply your kinsmen; they are your fellow-Christians; forget them not. Your superfluities are many; contribute a portion, I entreat you; each according to his ability, contribute a portion, and the Lord will bless the remainder of your store. I pray you to refresh the cold and barren north with the droppings of your liberality. They will bless you; they will make their prayers to ascend for you; and the Lord will reward you.

And here I may speak a word to the co-operators with this most ancient of our Scottish societies, that if your schools had contemplated no more than the culture of the intellect, I should not have been here this day to plead for them, though they had taught all the science of the Institute of France, and all the philosophy of a Scottish university. It is because you diligently apply yourselves to the cultivation of the spirits of the children by the Word of God, that I have boldness to solicit this Christian congregation most earnestly to help you;—not only reading it in the days of the week, but on the Sabbath days gathering together both parents and children under catechists and teachers, or otherwise instructing them from the lips of the most pious of the congregation and church. Continue faithful in this, and watch unto prayer, and you shall reap the blessing abundantly. Make known unto the children the way of eternal life, as the catechists of the primitive Church were wont to do to the children of the Christian Churches; and let me tell you that these children with whom you have to do are all members of the Christian Church by baptism, to be blessed with all the blessings of a believed gospel, or to be cursed with all the curses of a rejected gospel. Give unto these little ones cupsful of cold water, and you shall not lose your reward; but give unto them of the bread of life, and the waters of the Spirit, and you shall be very abundantly blessed. Ye who sow shall be watered, and that which you sow in faith and tears shall be watered, and shall bear fruit many days hence. I entreat you therefore, brethren, to remember that you are giving to these children, not to me, not to the managers of the society, but to the children, to the little ones of Christ's family; food to feed the lambs of the flock, and nourishment to make

their hearts to sing for joy; and give in faith, give as to the great Head of the Church, from your several stewardships for which you are responsible; bring out of your treasures for the poor, and the needy, and the orphans. These, if they live, shall become the active servants of Christ, or of Satan; good and honest men and citizens, or turbulent, and factious, and wicked. Good men have sought to snatch them from spiritual ignorance and its fruits of wickedness, unto spiritual knowledge and its fruits of righteousness. It is for the community that they have done it, not for themselves. They have put themselves forward to do you a mighty service, and will you not be helpful to them in that which they have undertaken? Would you not be sorry to see the children scattered abroad to the snares of Satan, and devoured of his ravenous lust? Nay, if you could see the body even of one of them hurt and mangled, what sympathy, what comfort, what help would you not administer? But doth not faith present unto you their soul all mangled and torn, all comfortless, and dejected, and trodden down of Satan's pleasure? And will you not, dearly beloved brethren, yield to the sympathies of faith to the bowels of Christ, that which you would yield to sight? The Lord forbid that the things of sight should triumph in you over the things of faith. For it is written, "We walk by faith, not by sight;" "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." Do so this day, and we ask no more. We will then receive your offering as the offering of faith, and we know that it will be blessed; for faith is the soul of prayer, and faith is likewise the bond of the Spirit. And so may the Lord instruct your children, and bless them when you are gone, with good and faithful guardians, and do for you far beyond what we can ask or think, for the infinite merits of His dear Son, out of the inexhaustible fulness of His riches.

Oh, but if I were to give loose to the feelings of a Scotchman, which rise within my heart while pleading this the cause of the children of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, I could touch some themes which would stir up the fiery spirit of the North, and warm the generous hearts of the South. I could speak of the children of these schools as including the

orphans of those gallant men who have fought and conquered in every land, and were never known to turn their back upon the enemy of Britain. For from these regions have come forth the strength of those brave battalions which are the ornament of peace and the bulwark of war. Preaching in the heart of this metropolis, I can take little advantage of these themes, having no emblems around me to bring them vividly before you; and yet, in justice to my undertaken task, I must not omit to mention them. Many of those to whose education you will this day contribute, are the children of fathers whom God in His providence called forth from their peaceful vales and lonely mountains to stand as watchmen around the walls of the country, and turn the battle from her gates. From the inheritance of that richest dowry, a father's right hand, how many of these children were cut off, when their fathers, in their country's need, went forth and bled, and died, or were disabled in their country's defence, or in the bloody achievement of their country's victory and triumph. I reckon that our brethren in arms who so bravely gave themselves to die by sea and land during the wars of the infidel insurrection, and by their valour bore back for awhile to the abyss the spirits of turbulence, and have bound them again by stubborn law and government, did the best office for the world which these latter ages have beheld; and that it is due unto their bloody toils that we sit so quietly, each one under his own vine and under his own fig-tree, without any to make us afraid. And shall we forsake their children? Shall we abandon their orphan children to starvation and want? God forbid. It were enough to make the Lord cast us off, and yield us up to the beast from the bottomless pit, when he shall make his second ascent upon the stage of European affairs, if we should abandon the widows and the orphans of those who heretofore defended us. Brethren, it is a debt of gratitude you owe the children of those whose fathers gave themselves for you. There be this day soliciting you by my lips, sons of the men who fought and conquered for you in every region of the earth. Each notable victory by sea and land hath her representative pleading in me. Alexandria, Maida, Salamanca, Vittoria, Waterloo, and whatever other

place was made famous by the valour of our soldiers; the Nile, the Baltic, Trafalgar, and whatever other place was made famous by the stout valour of our sailors, have a representative pleading in me; children who are the orphans of rightful war; whose fathers fell, not in oppressing, but in liberating the world; whose fathers were an honour to our armies, the pride of the fight, the phalanx of the battle. It is goodly to behold their marshal array, each man clothed in the wild costume of his native mountains; for they were terrible to the enemies of their country, but in peace they were gentle and beloved: they are well spoken of in all the world for their fear of God, and their reverence of His holy Word. The children for whom I plead are of a worthy stock; whose fathers were ever ready to serve our country well; and when they had no more to give, they gave their precious lives, leaving their little ones to our care: and if ever children had a claim upon the care of their country, it is the orphans of the soldier and sailor who have died in their country's cause; whose support I do therefore commend unto you, not only at this time, in the collection which we are about to make, but by subscription, and in whatever way seemeth best to every one. As every one hath received the gift, even so let him minister the same, as stewards of the manifold grace of God, who is the father of the orphan, the husband of the widow, and the friend of the friendless in their habitation.

But let me remember, before I close, that I am the minister of Christ, and not the advocate of any particular society: and that I am surrounded with many ministers of the everlasting gospel, who watch over the flock of Christ both young and old, whom I do entreat, and those of them specially who are constituted and established over local boundaries, to watch over the souls of the children, and to be at charges that they be instructed as the children of Christ and the heirs of immortal glory. It is a horrid sin that in a land like ours, so well furnished with ministers of religion, and men of godliness, any of the people should grow up in ignorance of the legacy bequeathed unto them by Christ Jesus, or of the offices which God requireth at their hand. Therefore, let all ministers

of Christ, and especially the ministers of the Established Churches, whose opportunities are great above those of others, take heed to the instruction and the warning which I have this day lifted up amongst you. Oh, I do affectionately entreat my brethren of the ministry, whether established by law or not established, conforming or not conforming, all who love the Lord Jesus and wait for His appearing, all who recognise the immortal above the mortal, the invisible above the visible, the eternal above the temporal,—that you would wait upon the ministry of all souls, and not less upon the ministry of children than of men: and in all your ministrations, minister as the ministers, not to the earthly, but to the heavenly part, which God quickeneth in all who believe. Amen and Amen.

V.

THE CAUSE AND THE REMEDY OF IRELAND'S EVIL CONDITION.*

REV. IX. 20, 21.

And the rest of the men, which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

THE present condition of Ireland in every respect, physical, moral, and religious, is so appalling to every enlightened mind, and so grievous to every charitable heart, and withal so full of alarm to the well-being of the whole civil estate of the empire, as to make it every man's imperative duty, according to his gift, to bring counsel and help to those who are honestly engaged in the work of ministering to her relief, and finding out remedies for her diseases. To which office being now called by the desire of the Hibernian Society, who have long and zealously laboured in her behalf, and with all my heart consenting, I pray the Lord in His great goodness to endow me with understanding of His divine providence, and wisdom from above, rightly to apprehend and truly to express the mind of His Spirit concerning this matter, which lieth so near to every humane and to every Christian heart.

I will not occupy the time, which is precious, in the description of that troubled and disordered condition, which it requireth twenty thousand armed men to repress; nor recount those excesses and enormities of every kind with which the public papers for many years have been filled; nor narrate

* Preached before the Hibernian Society, May 1825.

what with my own eyes I have seen, and with my own ears heard, of their ignorance and superstition, while I pursued my tract of observation from hamlet to hamlet, and from cabin to cabin, through the northern and eastern provinces of Ireland, partaking the hearty and liberal welcome of her people, whereof the remembrance doth now fill my soul with resolution to say and do this day for their sake whatever the Lord may enable me. For it is well known by all who have any knowledge of the condition of this poor and wretched people, how they are living, the greater part of them, upon the very edge of want, necessity barely at the staff's end, famine at the door, epidemic disease ever watching and ready to spread its wings abroad, and devour much people; their irascible passions in a continual ferment, and bringing forth crimes hitherto unheard of; conflagrations of whole families; murders, not by solitary assassins, but by armed troops; fratricides and patricides; abductions of women for matrimony, after the manner of New-Holland savages rather than civilised and religious men; their superstitions by the margin of holy wells, by consecrated lakes, in solitary dells, and rocky mountains; their exorcisms of evil spirits, and easy faith in the miraculous priests, more kindred to the superstition of the South African nations than of other Catholic lands;—these things being but too well known, and on every hand acknowledged, and, I may say, of all lamented, I conceive it were but a loss of time to dilate upon, and shall therefore address myself rather to consider the sources of the evil and the method of its cure.

It is the usual way with men, for a great evil to look for a conspicuous cause; and as nothing standeth out so prominently as the administrators of government, they have generally a large share of the blame laid upon their shoulders. But if any one would consider for a moment how little the doings or misdoings of government have affected the character of his own mind, or changed the events of his life; and how little they are able, if they chose, to make an ignorant man wise, or a vicious man virtuous; and when they do usurp this office, as in China and other patriarchal governments, what helpless children they make of men,—he would soon discover

that it rests with causes far more near at hand, and constant in their operation, to undermine the stable and good condition, or to restore the ruined and evil condition, of a people. Governments, then, only begin to be felt with fatal consequence, when they undertake more than belongs to them, and, from preserving peace and levying lawful tribute, would meddle with the private intercourse of man with man, the duties of man to himself, and the duties of man to his Maker; of which personal, social, and religious conditions, the wholesome or unwholesome state is that which doth determine the character of a people, yea, and the character of their government also: wherefore the Lord hath not left these in the hands of governors, but reserved them unto Himself; and though He hath been at great pains to establish the foundations of society upon the basis of obedience to the magistrate, in that which belongeth to the magistrate's office, He hath been at still greater pains to teach us that over the conscience He alone hath the authority: which inward man of the heart to enlighten, and guide, and overrule, He hath given us the Law and the Gospel; the latter to fit and enable us for the keeping of the former. Wherefore it is not to be doubted, that when diseases of various kinds shew themselves in the personal, social, and religious character of a people, so that from being industrious they are idle; from peaceable, turbulent; when from merciful and kind, they are full of revenge; from enlightened, they are ignorant; and from wise, foolish; when from religious they are fanatical; and from being worshipful of His invisible power and Godhead, they are worshippers of things seen and temporal;—these diseases are brought about by some disordered state of the inward organs of spiritual life, and the continual administration of unwholesome food to the soul's necessities, rather than by the operation of any outward cause, however great it may seem or may really be.

But if any one, from scanty meditation upon, and little acquaintance with, the secret springs of the well-being of men and states, still denieth the cause of this evil, and expecteth its cure from the administration of government, I pray him to look at the condition of the English Dissenters during the

two centuries of their existence, who have been liable to the same political disabilities, tried with the same jealousy, as the Roman Catholics of Ireland, and are now held under the same restraints; yet so far from exhibiting any of the same evil conditions of a disorganised people, they have been, on the other hand, the most orderly, virtuous, and enlightened part of the common people of England, and are so unto this day. But if any one would object to this—which I consider as decisive proof that the evil lies deeper than political disabilities—that the residence of the higher classes, and the presence of a middle class, prevent the evil effects of political distinction from being revealed in England; then I have to shew the example of Scotland for the whole century before the last, oppressed far beyond any oppression which Ireland ever endured, and during the last century twice the theatre of civil wars, and now more partially governed, (if I must speak of these things,) more close and narrow in her political system; as corrupt, yea, and more so, in as far as political influence can go; her nobility in a great manner non-resident; her middle class formed, as every middle class must be, by the industry, skill, and good conduct of the poor; her soil more scanty, her climate more rude: and yet none of those demoralized conditions have been revealed in her, and she hath overcome those partial evils by that steady course of improvement which a people well instructed, when left to themselves, and even against opposition, never fail to pursue. But at once to expose the exaggeration of this political cause, to which everything is traced, we have the *experimentum crucis*, the decisive evidence furnished by Ireland itself, of which the northern province is confessedly more like to Scotland in character and condition than to the three sister provinces of Ireland; where various branches of industry have taken root, which in the south have died out; and where, though there be a greater diversity of religious faith, the cruelties and enormities of the south are seldom heard of; and yet this province labours under the same want of noble residents, under the same tythe-system, and in all other respects is under the same conditions of government with the rest. Which things concerning the political cause I state loosely

and generally, in order to shew that this is not all nor the chief source of the evil, without intending to say that it hath not had its share along with others in producing the misery of this miserable land.

These instances, which have been adduced in order to remove this bugbear of a political cause, to which all evils are wont to be ascribed, will serve the higher purpose of introducing us to the true cause of the evil. The northern province of Ireland differs from the rest in no natural advantage or outward condition; and in respect to non-resident proprietors, it hath the disadvantage, forasmuch as the best parts of Antrim and Derry are possessed by the corporations of London; but in this it differs, that it has, in addition to the Church Establishment, a large body of Presbyterian Dissenters, following generally the doctrines and discipline of the Church of Scotland, who have uniformly maintained our orthodox doctrine till lately, when the Arian heresy a little infected them; from which, thank God, they are becoming delivered. This also is the true difference between the English Dissenters and the Roman Catholics—who are the same in respect to political disability—that they differ in their ecclesiastical conditions; the former drawing near to the Scottish Establishment, which is essentially spiritual and unformal; the latter belonging to the Church of Rome, essentially formal and unspiritual, and of that Church being, as I take it, the most sensualized daughter. When to these instances you add those which lie at our hand in this very city, where no influence of new manners, customs, and society, can reclaim the Catholics from abiding in their misery and turbulence and ignorance; and in other cities, as Glasgow, where, though there was but one in a street, I was wont, in my pastoral visits, to distinguish the house of a Catholic without an inquiry, by its squalor and misery; and in the country parts, as in Lancashire, where the people are not to be reclaimed by the sweet influence of rural scenery and country life, that they should not shew the same symptoms of ignorance, misery, and turbulence; these causes together give shrewd reason to suspect that the root of the evil is in their religion, and would lead a sober and unprejudiced man to

search that matter to the bottom before proceeding further in the inquiry; which I shall now do, endeavouring, as far as I can, to forget what our fathers suffered from it, when they protested against its errors, and delivered themselves from its yoke, by the sacrifice of their most precious lives.

Now, it is no matter to this inquiry how that religion is explained by doctors, and held forth in protestations of the assembled hierarchy; of which one lately issued now lieth before me, and speaketh like a lamb; because the inquiry concerneth its influence upon the people, and therefore it is requisite that we should study it in the aspect which it bears to the people, and peruse its face, as from the position in which they look upon it. For I am not ignorant that every point of the orthodox Christian faith is contained under a disguise in the doctrines of the Romish Church, and through that disguise may be discerned by those whose spiritual perception is quick. Nor am I ignorant, as an eloquent divine of our own Church, in this very city, and before this very society, set forth, that there exist in the Protestant communions buddings of the same errors; nay, that they exist in the carnal nature of every true believer, and are only held from bearing fruit unto sense and wickedness by the light and life of spiritual truth. Nor am I ignorant that the Catholic doctors are able to make most excellent apologies, yea, and most able argments, for the better truth which is hidden under the veil of their outward ceremonies. But these demonstrations of ingenious men, I am bound wholly to set aside, when I am considering the effect of the system, not upon ingenious men, but upon the vulgar, the ignorant, upon a people in the condition in which the people of Ireland are found, and in which, to begin with, they are found in all countries yet unconverted to the faith of Christ. The question is, What is the Catholic religion to an Irish peasant? and what effect is it likely to have upon his character? Away, then, ingenuity; away, then, dogmatism; come memory, come truth, come reason to our help in this fair and open-faced inquiry.

And now, that I may not be accused or blamed of bringing to this question Protestant prejudices, as they are called, I

have a desire to keep, as much as is consistent with the truth, upon the neutral ground of right reason and common sense, and to shew unto all men what must be the effect of a system of religion which applies itself to the sense, and through the sense seeketh access to the spirit; the which, if any man deny to be the case of the Roman Catholic religion, I cannot hold this argument with him, but must refer him for ocular and auricular demonstration to their worship, from the entry to the exit of which he will find himself thus, and I may say in no other way, addressed: Holy water, to signify the purification of the Spirit; lighted tapers around the altar, to denote the enlightening of the Spirit; fumigated incense, to denote the sweet odour of a pious soul; tinklings of silver-toned bells, to call for the aves and paternosters of the people; statues and pictures, to save the mind the exercises of abstraction, contemplation, or meditation; a visible Deity before which to bow the knee; penance and bodily mortification, to assist the contrition of the soul; absolution purchased by pilgrimages, as was the other day issued to all Papal Christendom by their head; and the immediate addresses to God uttered in Latin, which the people understand not; and, in short, I hardly know anything which is not disguised under a coverlet of sense. Now, I am not ignorant of the pious accommodation, to an ignorant and sensual age, out of which these types and symbols of spiritual things arose, in order to retain some knowledge of the mysteries of Divine truth in the apprehension of the people; nor of the plausible construction which can be put upon them by ingenious men in these times, and the tolerant eye with which they are regarded by those who should know better. Which pretexts of necessity, and plausibilities of expediency, do only make me the more desirous to shew unto your good understanding that while this culture and honour of the sense remaineth in the sanctuary, it is impossible to think that you can have anything but sensuality out of it; and that it is utterly vain to think, by laws or by education, or by anything else, to make that people moral, provident, refined, or spiritual, who are accustomed in their religion to have the sense taken into concert with the spirit, yea, preferred before it, as the vehicle

through which alone the spirit is to act. But it may be said, is it not the same in your Protestant communions, and indeed altogether necessary, that every communication to the spirit should pass through the vestibule of the sense, to which the Word of God, and the preachers of it, must address themselves, and through which alone one spirit is able to hold communication with another? Certainly it is true, that the Father of spirits hath addressed His children through the medium of the sense, writing to them in His Word, and speaking to them by His ministering servants, and establishing, by outward sacraments, and an ordained priesthood, and other outward means, a visible Church; and I am far from denying that there are great and continual occasions to idolatry among ourselves, and stumbling-blocks in the way of true spiritual religion, which alone keepeth the sense under due control. The Word of God, which is a Divine attempt to awaken the spirit through the natural understanding and feeling, by preaching to the natural man the best and surest knowledge of the past, the highest and most sublime forms of thought, the most refined sentiments, and the most pure and holy feelings of the soul; this very Word is continually used by Satan to entrap men into self-idolatry of their natural understanding which apprehendeth, and their natural heart which acknowledgeth, these revelations; and so to beget Unitarianism on the one hand, or sentimentalism on the other, which are, in respect of outward appearance, only one degree better than sensual superstition,—while, in respect of faith, they are worse than Popery, which doth not deny, but only veil the truth. And from running headlong into this reason-worship, which is Infidelity, and which, if time permitted, I could shew to be Atheism—that is, the denial of a personal God—we of the Protestant churches can only be preserved by the continual preaching of the personal and Divine Word, the personal and Divine Spirit, to work in us the true faith and understanding of that literal word and natural Spirit which the natural man apprehendeth in the Holy Scriptures. And forasmuch as I perceive very few amongst us who are able to handle the various offices of the Persons in the Trinity, and that the admiration and instruc-

tion of our preachers is generally given to the written Word, and the intellectual propositions thereof, I have a strong presentiment that we are destined to prove the bleak and barren regions of infidelity, and to be deluged with the sore and bloody plagues of God which dwell there. Also I am willing to allow, that in the Protestant churches the minister, by being the organ of communication between God and the people, is apt to become to the ear and the eye and the understanding of the people a blind intercepting the light of the Divine Spirit, instead of being a mirror to reflect it; and that at this day, and especially in this city, there is a trust in the word of a minister, and a fondness for his person, and an acquiescence in his opinions, which savoureth of sectarianism rather than community,—is as unpropitious to strong and steadfast faith, and as obnoxious to direct error, as the priest influence and priestcraft so much complained of amongst the Papists. Which avenue to sensual worship is not to be shut otherwise than by self-denial on the part of the preacher, the extinction of all party spirit, by instructing the people that no one can teach savingly or profitably but the Holy Spirit, and that the preacher is merely a voice or personification of the written Word, which cannot of itself save a soul, otherwise than by the application of the Spirit, shewing it personified in the Son of God, who was the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us. In like manner, the visible sacraments and outward ordinances of religion which address the sense, have all the like tendency to be substituted for the religion of the Spirit, of which they do but present the outward guise, and are ofttimes so substituted in our Protestant churches, especially in those who have preserved most of the form and circumstance, of the pomp and ceremony and furniture, of the Latin Church, instead of reaching back to the primitive Church. And this again is only to be prevented by the continual demonstration of the emptiness of all forms, and hollowness of all unspiritual acts of worship, the danger of hypocrisies, and the continual course of idolatry by every avenue; yea, we should trample upon the very altar, if it is made an idol of, and raze the temple to the ground, and empty ourselves, as Paul did, and shew the

weakness of the written Word itself, and the unprofitableness of all creeds, prayers, and confessions, when they become idols to the people. Instead of which, I think we are all gone mad with vanity, crying up our standards or no standards, our forms or no forms, our sects and peculiar differences;—disputes which, while others of my profession think fading away, I for one believe to be increasing amongst the sects which compose the visible Protestant Church; though there be a few, a very few, as it were one of a family and two of a tribe, who have their spiritual senses exercised to discern the brethren of the true spiritual Church, by whatever name named, and in whatever country found.

Forasmuch, then, as the sense is ever awake to take occasion by all means to oppress the Spirit, and useth even the natural understanding and natural feeling to maintain the ascendency, yea, and maketh an armoury of the very Word of God; and this amongst Protestants, who had their origin, and have chosen it as their particular province in the Church universal, to protest against the sensual idolatry which had crept into the Romish Church; how can it otherwise be, but that, in that Church, which hath by our protestation been only the more forced back upon the strongholds of its superstition in the sense, and did, in the Council of Trent, sanctify and perpetuate what before was regarded as abuse, there should prevail amongst the ignorant people the most debasing idolatries, of a more refined kind amongst the more enlightened, and with almost all, both priests and people, capital and fundamental errors upon the nature of that spiritual worship, and the spring of that willing obedience which God requireth of man. Nor is it to be doubted by any one who, in Ireland or in France, or in Spain, hath looked upon the worship of the common people, that it is one unvaried system of base and abominable idolatry, unrelieved by taste, undignified by knowledge; that the priests are witnesses and promoters of it; and that if a priest should see the wickedness of it, he could not help it, nor stand before it, but must either retire to some regular order, and hide his pure and spiritual worship in a cell, or, by declaring his convictions openly in his own Church, become a martyr to the faith of Christ Jesus, or finally

protest, as did our fathers, against it, and betake himself to the bosom of the Protestants, however weak in our faith, and unspiritual in our lives we have become.

The great fundamental article, and most constantly operative idea, of the Christian religion is, the idea of God, as the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, whom no eye hath seen, neither can see, and to whom alone worship is due, who is in all creation, but nowhere visible in it, according to the word of the Lord:—"No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed him;"—who is to be worshipped equally in every place, though confined to no particular place, according to that other word of the Lord, "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." This great idea of the spiritual worship of a Being everywhere present to the spirit, and nowhere present to the sense, hath the effect, when entertained in the spirit, of making every act of knowledge concerning Him, every act of faith upon Him, every act of prayer unto Him, every act of obedience unto Him,—that is, the whole of religion, to proceed from the spirit, and to be done in the spirit, and consequently to redeem the spirit from the flesh, and to quicken it with a continual life. It also maketh this spirit-quickening worship convenient to all times, and to all places, and to all companies; only requiring of the worshippers to sink into the impervious and undisturbed secrecies of his own spirit, and worship there in spirit and in truth. Yet doth it not fight against stated times of private prayer, family devotion, or public worship, which have their reasonableness and duty in the laws of our domestic, social, and civil constitution, whereto God hath accommodated His visible Church, which yet in themselves have a continual tendency to become local and circumstantial, sensual, and æsthetical, and cannot be preserved spiritual, but by the continual presence of the great principle of all worship, that "God is a Spirit, and they that

worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Now, observe how the Romanists, in their endeavour to help the spirit, by means of the sense, hearing, imagination, and understanding of the natural man, have wholly changed its character. They have consecrated churches, as indeed have others, and made pilgrimages to them to be accounted of great merit; they have consecrated times of worship, canonical times, matins, and vespers, days, and months, and years, for solemn and more solemn worship; they have consecrated numbers, making the times of saying prayer a necessary condition of their value in the sight of God; they have made worship an adjunct of time, place, and number: I might also add, of gesture, and of clothing, and of everything the most volatile and changeful. But this is not all: they made the object of their worship visible, not by pictures and by statues only, but by their doctrine of the sensual presence in the sacrament; which, however it be understood by the more enlightened, is by the multitude, both of priests and people, and I shrewdly conjecture by almost all, worshipped, and bowed down to, and implored as the true and very presence of God. This is the idolatry of idolatries, the stronghold of the sense, the sanctification of it, the deification of it, the destruction of the Spirit, and the sealing of its destruction among all the people by whom it is stedfastly believed.

But that no one may accuse us of overleaping an important step of this argument, I shall follow out the effect which this sensualizing of the idea of the Trinity hath upon the details of religious service among the Roman Catholic people. If Christ, the Mediator and Intercessor, had been a distinct and separate substance from the Father, instead of being a distinct person only and the same substance, then the orthodox faith would have been liable to all the objections which the reason-worshippers bring against it, of making another God, who intercepteth all the worship and reverence, and homage, of the only living and true God. Which the Catholics bring about in very deed and truth, by making intercessors of sanctified men, who are distinct and separate subsistences, and do intercept not only the honour of Christ, but the very worship of God. Now no man shall persuade

me that the common people do not worship the Virgin Mary and the saints, when I see them paying their devotions at the shrines, addressing prayers to them by name, bestowing upon them their gifts, keeping their days with most exact observance, and exhausting upon the tutelary saint of their village, or of the house, or of the day, all the acts of their devotion: and if any one say me nay to this conclusion, then I ask him at what times, and seasons, and by what acts do the people bestow their worship upon the one living and true God?—for I find the whole visible diligence of their devotion elsewhere paid. You have, therefore, all the evils of a Polytheism to begin with, their saints being in truth their very gods; and to such an extent hath this prevailed in Spain, that the various parts of the body are conceived to be under the care of their several saints, to whom, in all cases of infirmity, prayer is to be made, and offerings, through the medium of the priest; and so it is, I know, also in Ireland with respect to holy wells, as I myself have witnessed. Now, from idolatry what evils spring, what judgments are threatened, and have been executed upon it by God, and how very jealous the Lord is of His honour, who knoweth not that hath perused the history of Divine Providence since the world began. And, even without a threat, or execution of a threat, it must be so, that while this lasts, the minds of the people must remain in beggarly wretchedness, their invention asleep, their industry idle, their knowledge childish, their whole soul slavish. For what elevation of the soul can there be in addressing our prayers unto one who was lately a man as we are! What idea of a constant, wise, and holy Providence, which is to be counteracted in its courses by the intercession of a thousand diverse agents, bribed to our aids with gifts and ornaments! What redemption from the power of sin, by the help of one outward to ourselves, who hath no power to enter into the soul, and set its evil dispositions into a Divine and holy order! What sorrow for sin, which can be compensated by a piece of money! What idea of sin doth it presuppose when such a system is practicable? What sense of duty, when the violation of every duty can be estimated? No wonder that the murderer, who the other day clove his friend to the chine, in

order to possess the small contents of his till, should say in the prison, "If I could but see my priest, I know I should get to heaven."

It is very fine for our sentimentalists to speculate upon the sublime effect which the pomp of the cathedral service hath upon the mind,—I would rather say, upon the sense and the mind acting by the sense: but I have no cathedral to take my poor Irish people to, and so must dispense with the glory of St Peter's and Notre Dame. I have but poor cabins of meeting-houses with which to regale the sense of the people for whose misery I plead. It is a sensual religion, without the comforts or entertainments of the sense. There is none of the witchery of art to hide their wickedness, but bare blank wickedness. I have seen the poverty and meanness of it. I have seen the violent passionate actions of the people, and heard their incoherent mutterings, and witnessed their prostrations and beatings of the breast, and felt that it was very fearful to be offered unto God as His holy worship. Now time would fail me to set forth at one hearing what must be more patiently discussed, the various forms of evil which flow in upon a people who give up, first, their ancient well-being to the sense; secondly, who allow their natural understanding to be over-ruled by it; thirdly, who allow the natural feelings or sentiments of the heart to be tainted by it; and, lastly, who allow the faith of the Spirit also to be subjected thereto. All this I have written out at length, and would fain declare, were there somewhat of former latitude allowed to preaching, in order to shew, upon the neutral ground of reason and common sense, without any Protestant prejudices, what must be the effect.

The second great idea or doctrine of revelation is, the incarnation of the eternal Son of God, in order to make known to us the love of His Father and our Father, the offering of Himself as a ransom for our sins, and the work of the Holy Spirit in our sanctification. The mediatorial offices of the Son of God, as our Prophet, Priest, and King, have, ever since the beginning of the world, been believed in by the Church, and regarded as the pillar and ground of the truth, being necessary to manifest God's holiness, His mercy, and His love; to

humble and empty the sinner of security, pride, and self-righteousness; to open the flood-gates of the selfish soul for receiving the common light, common love, and common joy of the Holy Spirit; to create and continue a church or communion of saints upon the earth, of which Christ is the only head; to offer its prayers, praises, and spiritual sacrifices in the presence of God, and in the end to raise up from the dead, and glorify for ever in the sight of all the universe the faithful subjects of his mediatorial kingdom. Which manifold offices of the second Person of the Divine Trinity for the redemption and salvation of sinful men, were realised as facts, by the incarnation, brought into the visible for a short season, and again carried into the invisible, that we might know the affections towards man which are felt by Him who sitteth at the right hand of God, and to whom all power in heaven and earth is given of His Father. Which power He now executeth for His faithful Church by the Holy Spirit, and shall manifest when He shall come again in majesty and glory. The incarnation is not the sacrifice of Christ which was from eternity offered up: it is not the power and glory of Christ which is yet to come, neither is it the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, which could not be till He had passed within the veil; but it is that which realiseth all these, and maketh them events in the world's knowledge and experience. This is its exact value, and no more. But to man in his fallen state how valuable is this, forasmuch as everything must have remained a mystery without this manifestation. Now, observe how the Catholics make void this great doctrine in all its points. First, by the doctrine of the real bodily presence in the Eucharist, they perpetuate the Incarnation, by presenting to the people a visible Saviour every time they perform mass, and by pretending to offer Him up for their sins. We Protestants, indeed, bungle this matter of the sacraments sadly: and were it not for the writings of a former age, I think we should, by our eternal discourses of the Lord in flesh, as if that were the all and in all of Divine love, instead of being but the revelation of the all in all, be in great danger of sensualising and temporising the faith in which we are planted: but the Catholics do this with a witness, by presenting, when-

ever the priest pleaseth, the very body of Christ, keeping their disciples in that twilight of the Spirit, in which the apostles were while yet the Man-God was before them, which made it necessary and profitable for them that He should go away. Then they have done away with His office of the Prophet, by depriving the people of the reading of the Scriptures, and teaching them the matters thereof very scantily; and commonly by sensible representations of the scenes from His nativity to His crucifixion, making a sort of panorama, or wax-work representation, of His acts and sufferings. They have deprived them of His priestly office, by interposing the merits of saints, and the intercession of saints, and the value of masses to deliver souls and intercede for transgressors. They have robbed Him of His kingly office, by constituting the Pope head of the Church, which is now waiting for her Head to appear, and setting upon the head of the Pope the triple crown, to indicate the power he hath in heaven, and earth, and hell. So that Christ is nothing, and the Pope is everything that Christ should be in the sight of the people. It is a grand endeavour of man to constitute before the time that kingdom which Christ is hereafter to set up. Wherever the idea of power is incorporated with the Church, it leaves nothing to be hoped for from Messiah's second coming; and wherever other intercession and other merit is received as a doctrine of the Church, it leaves nothing of substantial consolation to be derived from His first coming. And in that degree in which any Church or any Christian is denuded of the idea of worldly power, or human merit, in that degree is that Church or Christian built upon the faith of Christ's first coming, and the hope of His second coming. For power is the strongest desire in the soul, and, being voluntarily humbled with Christ in His humiliation, doth feed itself with satisfaction, in the hope of His second coming. And the sense of justice or righteousness, being the health of every soul, that soul which seeth its own worthlessness, must look to Him who instructeth it therein, for a fresh fountain of righteousness to be supplied from, else is it most miserable.

This leads us to observe the third great doctrine of revelation which the Catholics have made void by their traditions

namely, the office of the Holy Ghost in quickening the spiritual life, and nourishing it from the fountain of wisdom and righteousness, of light and life, which is in Christ Jesus. For this our Lord desired to go away, that His disciples might be taught in the Spirit, by the Holy Spirit which He was to send unto them. And not until He went away did the Holy Spirit come in the plenitude of His inspiration to build up the Church upon the foundation of Christ Jesus;—which He did in the beginning, by giving outward visible demonstrations of His power and operations, in the gifts of tongues, in the gifts of healing, in the gifts of interpretation, in the gifts of prophesying, and whatever other miraculous endowments the primitive Church was clothed withal. Now, understand you that these visible and noticeable acts of the Spirit were to serve the same end as the incarnation of Christ, were, so to speak, his incarnation, or those visible and noticeable things which might make His offices a historical fact in the Church, which might be reported unto us, in order to strengthen our faith in the Holy Spirit, and teach us by outward emblems what His offices were; by the gift of tongues teaching us that the Spirit is a mouth and a tongue unto the believing soul, and the harmonizer of all tongues into one; by the gift of healing, that He is a healer and comforter to the soul; by the gift of interpretation, that He is the interpreter of the word of Christ, taking and shewing it unto our souls, by the gift of prophesying, that He is the Spirit of the Christian ministry;—and so forth, through all His spiritual offices, which, that they might be realised in historical and marvellous manner, took these miraculous forms to begin with, even as Christ took a body of flesh and blood to begin His mediatorial work withal. Now, observe how they have made void this doctrine by their sensualities. First, they have made that manifestation of the Spirit to the sense of man perpetual, holding miracles of all kinds to be in the Church unto this day, and so making the Holy Spirit visible, as they have made the Father and the Son. In the second place, they have taken away His office of interpreting the Word, and given it to the visible Church, whose opinion and judgment, though we are much to revere them, we dare not take as the voice of

God. Thirdly, they have taken away His office of convincing the soul of sin, and moving it to prayer, by raising confession to a sacrament, and making visible catalogues of all sins, and of their purgations; whereas confession, and the receiving of confession, and the absolution of the soul, are all the work of the Spirit. And as to the working of righteousness by the Spirit, it is clean avoided, by the doctrine of outward works, and acts of penance, and acts of supererogation, and whatever outward forms of things they have substituted for the spiritual realities. My soul gathers wrath and indignation at the meditation of all these idolatries; my spirit is vexed within me; and I am often moved to dash away this meditation of cool and temperate reason which I have undertaken, and in which I have thus far persevered against the temper of my mind.

Now, whereas I believe that the Christian religion is, in its true form and perfect influence over the spirit, exactly according as the worship and offices of the Three Persons in the Trinity are preached unto, believed by, and constantly present to the people, I might stop here and go no further into detail, in order to shew how in all the wholesome and blessed applications to the mind, to the heart, and indirectly to the sense, which the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, make to mankind by the quickening of our spirits, must necessarily be lost, must necessarily be changed in their character, and made unwholesome and mischievous, when these offices of the personal Godhead are rendered out of spiritual language into sensual language, brought out of the invisible into the visible, by the ill-judged accommodations of priests unto an ignorant people, or rather by the pusillanimous yielding of the true spiritual interpretation to the hunger and thirst of the vulgar and popular mind, for intellectual, æsthetical, and sensual, rather than spiritual representations.

And certes it is not against the Roman Catholic Church that I level these censures, nor for the Hibernian Society that I make this advocation; I have another enemy to contend with, even Satan, enthroned in the citadel of sense, and wooing the beautiful world, wedding the mind and heart of men to the sensible and visible forms of things; and I have another

to plead for, even the poor sin-oppressed, Satan-ridden spirit of man, whom Christ hath come to redeem and save. And I do feel, as hath been said, that we Protestants stand in almost equal peril with these Catholics, which is not the less dangerous because it is not so monstrous in appearance; and I do wish in my heart, that the Roman Catholic Church would send forth some very spiritual men, who might retaliate upon us, those acts of love which our very active, but not very spiritual men, are inflicting upon them. For, I believe, before God, and in His protection, I dare to utter it, that my own Church is translating spiritual truth into intellectual forms as zealously as ever the Papists did translate them into sensual forms, and that the "dry rot of infidelity" is working as hastily her destruction, as the fermentation of sensual lust is working the downfall of the Papacy. And I believe, moreover, that in the ruling party of the Church of England, there is as much of formality and Pharisaism, and as much if not more hatred of spiritual truth than in the Papacy, which hath retreats where piety pours itself out unseen. And that, take it for all in all, the Church of England, though pure in doctrine, and devout in prayer, hath, from total want of discipline, no right to be considered as a church, but as a mere national institution where Christian doctrine is preached. And I believe, moreover, that the Dissenting bodies are becoming generally so political and sectarian, not to say radical in their spirit, and so invaded with popular feeling, so commanded and overawed by it, that the Spirit of God is very closely confined, and sorely grieved, and much quenched amongst them. And to the evangelical body of the Church of England, which I did once look upon as a star in the gloom, and to the spiritual of all churches and sects (for it is the work of the Spirit blowing where He listeth), I have this to say, that if they will preach less a dogmatical, and more a personal gospel; that is, present the persons of the Godhead, thus purposing, thus speaking, and thus acting, for men, rather than the abstract purpose, word, and action, if they will go about to separate a Church from the worldly mass by preserving the sacraments, those bulwarks of the visible Church, full of meaning, and pure in application, as far as man can preserve them, the Lord

may be pleased to make them the bearers of His standard; but if not, (and faint, faint are my hopes,) if they go about to court the favour of princes and prelates, and put their trust in their growing numbers, or in their Shibboleths of shallowest doctrine, or in their favourite preachers and approved books, then let them mark that it was spoken and said unto them by one that loves them much, though Him they have little loved, that they also shall die away like an untimely birth, and bring forth no fruit of reformation to the land; and shall be cast out with that general casting out of the Gentile Church which is now at hand, when the Lord, weary with the obstinate and incurable rebellion of the Gentiles, shall visit them as He heretofore visited the Jews; and bring in the Jews, as He heretofore brought in the Gentiles, of His free grace, and give to them and the election of the Gentiles according to grace, the kingdom and glory everlasting, of which He hath spoken by the mouth of all His prophets since the world began.

Into which appropriation by the sense of all things to itself, if we were to inquire a little, we shall find it to be at the very core, and to be the very bane of our fallen nature; that it is a law strong and steadfast, which carries with it the natural mind, and turneth all its faculties from the spiritual Creator and the invisible world to the creatures and the visible world; which nourisheth the faculties and tastes and appetites, and other affections of the body, and in a manner deifies them, making their works, whether mechanical or ingenious, to be admired and held in reverence, and wholly exalting the visible world, and the properties thereof, as the fit and proper subject of man's study, of man's delight and appropriation, and that of all which the issue is sin and death; wherefore this evil bias of fallen man is called the law of sin and death in his members; and the mind with which it serves itself is called the carnal or fleshly mind; and the fruits of it are called the fruits of the flesh, which are these :—"Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." Contrary thereto is the law of the spirit, which is not able in the fallen creature to have free course, by reason of the bondage of its will, and

that original propensity to evil, which is the condition of a fallen creature, but is redeemed and delivered by the power of the Son of God, the original Creator of the spirit and of all things, who hath manifested the method thereof in His gospel, and made known to us the utter incapacity of nature to undertake the work, and the indispensable necessity of Divine power, which is therefore called grace, because it is freely offered to us without money and without price, and wrought in us by the abiding ministry of the Holy Ghost, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, and brings with Him into our hearts the good-will and gracious ministry of all the Persons in the Godhead, whereby we are created anew after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. The spirit, being thus born again by power from on high, puts forth its proper energy, in conformity with the will of God, and fights against the law of the sense, according to the words of the apostle, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." As the spirit grows in strength upon the milk of the Word, and feels its strong refuge in the divine Persons, and is able to hold communion with them by prayer, faith, and action, it cometh to pass that it reclaimeth and recovereth the various faculties of understanding and of feeling from the dominion of the senses, and turneth them to the discovery of God in every region of the visible world of providence and of grace, filling the outward forms and sloughs of things with spiritual substance, and beholding in the changing appearances and phenomena, the unchanging realities of the Divine purpose and goodness which they express, and so redeeming time, place, and circumstance to spiritual uses, and living a spiritual life in the midst of wicked visible things; all which cometh from the original fountain of Christ's righteousness, and floweth into our souls by the channel of faith, opened and kept open by the Holy Ghost. And "the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

Now, forasmuch as this is all my philosophy, all my political economy, all my legislation, and, in my opinion, containeth every good fruit which can grow upon the stock of human nature, I have nothing else to offer for the restoration

of the health of Ireland, affected with superstition and all its debasing fruits of sensuality; nor for the restoration of the health of Scotland, fast hastening into the worship of the understanding, with its various consequences of self-conceit, hardness of heart, barrenness of spirit, and formality; nor for the restoration of the health of England, distracted by a thousand contending sects, who work together a fermenting mass of religious and political confusion, out of which no man knows certainly what good and evil is to come, but that probably much of both is likely to arise. And therefore it becomes me, after having stated, according to my notion, the source of the evil, to set forth by what means these spiritual remedies ought to be applied to Ireland, seeing I do believe that it is only these which will accomplish the work of its regeneration.

II. With respect to the remedy to be applied to a people that have been suffered to fall into the low state of superstition and sensual degradation to which Ireland hath come, every man will speculate according to the faith he is of, and the light which God hath given him. Those that have no faith in a revelation of the will of God, and in a providence fulfilling the same, or only a nominal and inactive faith therein, as is the case with all our political economists, and almost all our statesmen, can of course look only to the secondary causes with which they are acquainted, and in the operation of which they have faith; in which lore of secondary causes being but indifferently read, it is a poor and beggarly account they can give of the matter; but such as it is it must be mentioned and considered, because of the noise it has made, and the likelihood that it will in whole or in part be adopted. Being ignorant of the spiritual world, and most of them ignorant that they have a spirit, and none of them believing in its redemption, and regeneration, and mighty power over the carnal mind and the fleshly lusts, they conceive all religions to be much about a par with respect to political and social advantages, and cannot endure that our fathers should have made a difference, which they regard as the proof of their ignorance and prejudice, and to do away with which they

regard as the chief work of policy and statesmanship. And I blame not the men who know no better concerning the history of their country and of Europe, and of the Papacy and of the Reformation; for the mole must not be blamed because he pierceth not the heavens with his vision, as doth the soaring eagle; but I pity that this island should have come to such a pass as to prefer such ignorant minds of yesterday, such men of money and accounts, such ungodly and unspiritual men, to the honourable office of their representatives; and I pray God to give them the spirit of discernment, and the spirit of zeal for their best and dearest prerogatives, as a nation of reformed Christians. We have deserved it by a century of bickering and contention concerning paltry party distinctions of Whig and Tory, and total neglect of the interests of His Church, for which our fathers were so zealous as not to count their lives dear unto themselves, so that it might be defended from the paw of the wolf; so that the Protestant Church of Ireland was suffered to be managed like a close ministerial burgh, or something worse, and sheep-shearers, sheep-slayers were, with exceptions too few to be mentioned, poured upon the idolatrous people; whose idolatry was suffered to root and root itself more firmly; whose darkness was allowed to engross the people more and more darkly, because the questions of Papal idolatry or Protestant worship was not of importance sufficient enough to take up a thought in a century which was ushered in by the wits of Queen Anne, and seen out by the infidelity of Paine and the French Revolution. Ah, my God! Thou hast been very patient; Thy long-suffering hath been very great; it is time, yes, it is time that Thou shouldst arise: who can deny that the time is fully come? And accordingly, when the time of shaking the idols of the nations, and giving the sign of their downfal, came, at the close of their appointed period of time, times and a half, in the French Revolution, idolatrous Ireland felt the shock, and hath been shook still; and idolatry-tolerating Britain hath almost had a third part of her dominion rent away from her. If any man ask me why insurrection arose among the Catholics of Ireland, the most ignorant part of our people, and the least pervaded by revolutionary principles; and why disaffection still

sheweth its hydra head in those parts? I answer him, Because of the idolatry of the one part of the people, and the carelessness of the other part to protest against that idolatry, and above all, because of the indifference of the British Government to the question of God's worship within this dominion, which is the chief and great question of all His controversies, it came to pass that He sent into the midst of that unhappy land the scourge of civil war, and keepeth there the mouth of the volcano still open, and ready to send forth its destructive fires. But our governors, untaught by experience, unread in the history of God's providence over the nations, doting and dreaming on about questions of commerce and trade and finance, as if mammon were the King of kings and Lord of lords, are now come to the awful crisis of proposing to legitimitise the idolatry—not only to endure it but to patronize it—and some go so far as to propose to hire and pay it. I am not a politician, and do not choose to intermeddle in their angry quarrels; but I am a minister of God, consecrated by authority, and invested with power in this nation to declare the whole counsel of God, for the instruction of all ranks and offices of men within this realm; and being now called, in the providence of God, to make known unto this people the ills of Ireland, I do certainly declare, that the greatest, sorest, and most hopeless of her evils, is the remedy which by all means they are endeavouring to force upon her in every way; namely, the making no difference between the sensual idolatry of the Papacy and the spiritual worship of the living and true God: for not only was this the spirit of the debates which were holden thereupon, and the issue of the measure which was then contemplated, but it is the spirit of all who take to themselves the name of Liberal, and has been embodied with great dexterity in a scheme of parochial education, which, being drawn up by a royal commission, now lies before the members of our Parliament, and through them has come into general circulation, whereof the motto is this: Hold the scales even between the Catholic and the Protestant. Be at pains that the Catholic child imbibes not Protestant opinions, and that the Protestant child imbibes not Catholic opinions; it is not fair that advantage should be given to either party; that is,

the question is made one of party, not of principle, as if there were no principle involved in the matter, and all our fathers founded, the State and Church, were a worn-out parchment. Indifference it is, quintessence of just and impartial indifference to all that is at issue between the Protestant and the Catholic. The plan is, in every parish to set up a school, and have all the children taught letters and learning together in one place; and for that purpose to have two teachers upon an equal footing in those parishes where Protestant and Catholics are about equal; and where the disparity is great, to have a Catholic or Protestant teacher, with an usher of the other denomination, according to the preponderance of either party. That there should be a book of extracts from the Scriptures read in the school, consisting of such parts as Catholic and Protestant could agree upon; but no comment or enforcement of the teacher or usher permitted thereon, at whose hand no instruction in religion is to be permitted at all, but the use of the school is to be left to the Catholic priest to teach the Catholic doctrines to the children two afternoons in the week, and the same to the Protestant two other afternoons. Now this is certainly equity, whatever else it be; it is most certainly dealing it with a fair hand between Catholic and Protestant; and, if adopted, it will most certainly put it for ever to rest, whether this country regards the questions of the Reformation to be more than idle tales. To examine this scheme of education, I undertake not, leaving it to tell the tale of its own wisdom or folly; and I have but introduced it in passing, to shew that it is no question concerning seats in Parliament, or offices in the army and navy, that is now at issue; but whether the Catholic religion is not, to all intents and purposes, as good, righteous, and creditable a thing in a state as the Reformed. Ah, thou wretched Church of Ireland! to have permitted this to be a question, thou nurse of idleness, thou that hast been an incubus upon the breast of the people sleeping the sleep of death, thou deservest no better, and canst hardly expect any better, for thy conduct for a century, than to be treated as no better, if not worse, than the idolatry and abomination itself. Thou shouldst have made it apparent to the blindest, as the Church of Scotland hath

that there is a mighty difference between a superstition and a religion to the well-being of a state. But so it is with thee; our liberal men pecking at thee, and seeking to spoil thee of thy wealth and possessions, which thou hast too much loved; to deprive thee of the children over whom thou wast long ago established the nursing mother; and to raise to the level of thy dignity that base idolatry and superstition, for the extinction of which thou was established, and hast been so long maintained. I have little heart to defend thee, thou worthless, fruitless sister; and were more willing to blame and censure thee, as the most unworthy of the Protestant family; but that I perceive in thee repentance for thy backslidings, and the manifestation of a great zeal in behalf of those idolaters whom thou hast so long neglected. But even though thou wert but a leafless, sapless stump, methinks thou wert a less encumbrance than the upas-tree of the spiritual world, which these husbandmen of the state are so fond to praise and to defend from injury, and to water and to cultivate.

I do consider all these schemes which are brewing in the minds of our liberal politicians to be engendered partly of the most gross ignorance with respect to the influence of the Catholic religion upon the character of its votaries, of the utmost scepticism with respect to the influence of religion altogether, and a rooted error that religion hath no right to intermeddle with, or to be recognised by, political measures; measures which are then best when they treat all religions alike; that it is an unfair advantage to take of the infant mind to possess it with any particular inclinations to one or to another; and the more it can be avoided from the education of children and the government of men, so much the better. In short, the strong stream of the cultivated mind of this land is to divide and separate itself from the mind of God, and to carry with it all over which it hath an influence. And it is too late in the day to resist it with effect; it will have, and it will obtain its way. It will force all the barriers of the constitution, which are every one of them builded on a religious basis, and it will carry things with one general deluge of loose liberality and licentiousness. For it cannot be expected but that God will give it way: He will not always

resist: few are those of His servants who do now resist. The most steadfast of His servants are a little slack at the work; and the greater part of them are sapped at the foundations. It is not known how all the barriers of faith are even now corrupted, and how near to giving way and breaking up they are. God, I say, will give us up to their violence: He will help them; He will turn and help them; because we are a worldly, money-worshipping people, and a self-magnifying Church; have Christ in our mouth, but our own wondrous exploits in our heart. And God is not acknowledged in the counsels of our nation; and the name of His saints hath become a byword of scorn: and we are grown to be a poor, ignorant, sin-laden, self-sufficient people. The Lord will give occasion, and the enemy will serve himself of it; and the saints shall be tried as silver is tried. I judge, therefore, the time of remedy by counsel to be past, and the time of remedy by judgment to be at hand; and, therefore, what I now speak is rather a voice of warning to those who are in like manner disposed to stand forth and war. For we are not now dallying in the pleasure-grounds of ease, or in the highway of safety; but we are come near unto the brink, and alarm is the feeling proper to him who would himself be saved, or who would save others.

No remedy can have any effect which doth not at once address itself to the evil of the sensual religion which cultivates and sanctifies the sense, and oppresses the spirit; but those remedies of education and policy which they propose, go upon the principle that there is no evil in a sensual religion, but rather a good, forasmuch as they desire to promote it to some new point of advantage and dignity. The remedy is to attack the evil at once, and to contend with it face to face, and drive it out. Suffer not the idolatry to be; for so long as it is, and where it is, God will send a blight and barrenness of all grace and goodness; and not to them only, but to all who patronise it. Suffer it not to be: fight against it as more terrible than the pestilence or famine, or the sword of the invader; because it is that which bringeth all these instruments and executioners of the Lord's anger upon a people. Give it no toleration in your spirit: no, none; unless you would tolerate Satan's host, whose standard is idolatry. Tolerate it, indeed, if you would

tolerate ignorance, darkness, brutality, insurrection, civil war; which if you hate and hinder, then also hate and hinder idolatry and superstition.

But how fight against it? Not with sword nor fire. No, but with that which is proper to its destruction and abolition. Sword will not slay it, nor torture make an end of it. I would not retaliate upon the idolaters their treatment of our fathers. Neither do I exhort to or recommend pains and penalties as an instrument of the destruction of superstition. I will go as far as the Liberals in this kind of toleration. Nevertheless, I would destroy it, utterly destroy it, by that which is effectual to destroy it. And if I were a statesman, or representative of this land, I would meditate by night and by day—I would utter whatever seemed to me most likely to root it out. Now, of these means which have been found effectual to the destruction of this abomination, the first is the preaching of the Word, for the end of which our fathers planted a Protestant Church in Ireland, which our political reformers regard with evil eye, now when its services are mainly called for. Let the ministers of that Church, who know their calling of shepherds, and are not wolves in sheep's clothing, be stirred up to discharge it, not only for their scanty flocks, but for the population of their bounds, testifying in all ways and in all places against the idol-shepherds; not giving place to them for a moment, not compromising the truth for any sake, but rather exaggerating it, after the manner of an ancient prophet; for the days are cloudy, and the times are evil. You may as well think to charm the ocean with a song, as to dissolve Popish errors without strife, a strife of argument; and wherever they have had the upper hand, it hath soon been made a strife of blood. Therefore, who saith by peace you shall prevail, speaketh a lie: whoso saith by gentle compromises you shall take them, and by the manly and steadfast declaration of truth you shall lose them, doth utter a lie. They have possessed strongholds of error, which the armoury of truth alone can capture; truth set in array, truth set in battle-array. If truth was ever called upon to be a champion, and a champion-errant, it is in Ireland at this time, where error hath engrossed the great multitude of souls, and

is bringing forth deeds of darkness, and is extending his dominion of darkness more and more wildly. For every armed man now kept to rein in these fierce passions which their superstition hath begotten, give me an armed minister of truth, and there shall soon be peace and quietness; give me one for every hundred; give me but one for every thousand, who shall be at liberty to go forth, and with sufficient knowledge furnished, and with ready skill accomplished, and after a few years of hard fighting, you shall see the troops of the alien discomfited.

If these views of human nature and of religion be just, and these illustrations drawn from the observation and history of the world be correct, and God knows we have sought to declare nothing but the simple truth, it follows most clearly, that whatever doth tend to take these veils of sense from the spirit of the people, will best deliver them from the sensual and brutal condition in which they are found. To which end I know nothing so effectual as the preaching of the Word of God, which is given on express purpose, and by God's Spirit endowed with power, to redeem the spirit from the dominion of the flesh and of the carnal mind; which spirit being redeemed, gives rise to another law opposite to the law of sin and death, which is in our members. The evil of the present system is, that it is a compensation in sensible merits for sensible offences; so that the sense is honoured to atone for the sense, to enlighten the sense, to remedy the sense; and the more wicked it is in the guilt contracted, the more it is honoured in the guilt removed. While this system exists, you legislate, you educate, you civilise the customs, you improve the arts, and propagate the sciences in vain; of which the good fruit must first be realised in sapping the sensual religion. They will profit just as far as they emancipate the people from that basest of servitudes, which they may do, yea, and will do, but will plant no other religion in its stead, so that you will have the bitter edge of infidelity laid against the throat of superstition, and religion will perish in the conflict; which might have been preserved, had you, by the ministry of God's precious Word, strengthened the spirit to cast off the foul and deformed leprosy with which the beauty of religion hath been deformed.

And I perceive that this is to be the issue, if the same spirit be shewn by another House of Commons which was shewn by the present; to maintain the superstition, and in some sort to legalise it, yea, and to reward its services, or hire its loyalty—(Of the plan proposed by the Commissioners for Education, I say nothing now, as I recently had an opportunity of bringing it into contrast with the scheme of parochial education employed by our Church over my native land);—I make no doubt that the present evil condition of Ireland will work on until a crisis comes which nothing but preaching and teaching the truth will avert. Had the Protestant Church of Ireland done its duty, as the Presbyterian Church of Scotland heretofore did, there would have been as few Catholics in Ireland, and those of as harmless a kind, as there are in Scotland at this day. If there was anything to put in its stead, I would say that Church has deserved excommunication as much as ever the Church of Rome did. And our governors who have used it for their wicked policies have amply paid the penalty in a troubled and rebellious people. But, notwithstanding all their venal acts, the Lord hath looked graciously upon the Church, and quickened in it some seed which is beginning to refresh the wilderness. To such faithful ministers of the gospel of all denominations, but especially of the Established Church, I look as to the hopes of Ireland. If they will go into the highways and byways, and amongst the hamlets, and into the cabins of the people, teaching and preaching unto them the gospel of Christ for their salvation; and nothing scrupling, through fear or false delicacy, to expose to the uttermost the errors of the Romish superstition; there can be no doubt that a divine blessing will be poured out upon them, and upon the people of Ireland, for the sake of the gospel which they preach. I have far less hopes of schools than of the ministry—far less of reading than of preaching. The schools are neutralised by the fear of being thought to proselytise. They are supported by a multitude; and there is no multitude in these days, of which the greater part are not liberal, that is, patient of Roman Catholic errors. And, therefore, I have the less hope from schools. These Hibernian schools are certainly the best of them all, because they

have been the least timorous of giving offence to the liberal spirit of the times, and maintain readers among the people. But they also must be more decided before they can receive the full horn of the divine blessing. The wounds are too dangerous to be tampered with. Nothing but a bold hand is of any service; and I have ceased to expect any boldness or determination from any of our societies. They do all that such unwieldy and heterogeneous machines can do. But it is to individuals that I look, acting under the authority of God's Word, and Spirit, and Church; men who, being rightly qualified and regularly ordained to the ministerial office, will go forth as prophets amongst the people, and denounce the prophets of lies, and the idol shepherds, which the constituted authorities are disposed to patronise.

The effect of such an uncompromising and unaccommodating ministry of the gospel, would be to set up in arms all the guardians of the superstition, who would come forth to defend their ways and works of darkness; and between the two contending parties, the people would want a mediator and intercessor, to whose tribunal they might carry the appeal. And what so proper for this end as the words of the great Mediator recorded in the Holy Scriptures, which must therefore be one of the confederates in this warfare against idolatry? Not that the Scriptures by themselves will do the work of converting men, and building up churches, which is the great prejudice of Protestants in these days, whereby they give the Catholics a great handle of advantage; but that, according to the great principle of the Reformers, when anything concerning faith is in controversy, they are the last and only appeal. It never was intended that a book should of itself convert the world, else no more than a book would have been given; and it never hath happened that the Bible of itself hath wrought any great reformation in the Church. It is the spirit of man, quickened by the Spirit of God, through means of the Bible, and with the same means going forth to quicken other men, that every good work hath been wrought in the Church by God. And, for my part, I shall never allow it to be said, uncontradicted in my presence, that the reading of the Word, without the preaching of the Word,

is likely to accomplish anything good or great in the Church of Christ. It is after this idolatry of the book, the Bible, that the ignorance of Protestants runneth, whence there never was such zeal for the letters and leaves of the book, nor such plenty of them diffused abroad; and I believe in my heart, there never was less zeal for the spiritual treasures which it containeth, never a more insecure faith, never a more scanty knowledge of them. Oh that I saw some of that zeal which hath overspread the world for the written Word, transferred to the living Word; and some of that diligence about the verbal propositions and natural applications of the former, turned to the spiritual communion and living presence of the latter. The book, the Bible, is fast hastening to work on us Protestants similar effects to those which have been wrought upon the Catholics by the wafer-god. For our God is rather become a number of orthodox doctrines, or evangelical propositions, than the personal Creator, and Preserver, and Redeemer of all things, who hath, by the written Word, sent us, as it were, a gracious invitation and welcome to come and spend our spiritual being with Him, and rich offers of every blessing, if we will yield our consent. But it is no more. It is not God, it is not man, it is but the gracious invitation of God to man, and, therefore, it must not be exaggerated into everything. Nevertheless it is most necessary in the present condition of Ireland, and wherever a controversy hath been excited, or must be excited, which is the case at present, and must be more the case before any real and substantial improvement in their condition is effected. Where false coin is circulating with good, you must have a touchstone, as well for the honour of the good as for the detection of the evil, because there is doubt of all. The Romish priests, by instinct aware of the opinions which would thus be put out of circulation, have already resisted the diffusion of the Scriptures, and with many arguments to which our Protestant idolatry of the book giveth plausibility. But when they argue the inability of the people to draw thence a sound code of faith, and the tendency of the unlettered and uneducated to bring in their own narrow and partial interpretations, instead of the orthodox interpretations of the Church, our

answer should be, We admit it; and therefore we intend to accompany or to follow them as we can, with faithful preachers, who shall lead them into the right interpretation of the Church, from those mazes of error with which you have perplexed every doctrine, and every precept of the Divine Word. Oh for a few preachers who, possessing in their heart the written Word, quickened by the Holy Spirit, would go forth upon this errand, and, casting down the gauntlet of defiance to all the priests of Baal, would offer themselves to every proof that is possible of understanding, of devotion, of personal suffering, of the written Word, of the history of the Church, of the diverse characters of the worshippers, then would I have hope that the Bible would be sought, would be read, would be quickened; but without such preachers, I do not believe that it will work there, or elsewhere, the fruits that are looked for from it. The proof of what I say is to be found in the effect produced by the public controversies of the last year in quickening the demand for scriptural knowledge, although these controversies were only upon the outworks of divinity, and not upon the great questions which stir and agitate the soul. Once bring transubstantiation, and image worship, and works of supererogation, and priestly absolution, and purgatory, and such questions into issue, and call them by their proper names of falsehood, superstition, and idolatry, and you shall witness a ferment of soul, and a calling out for knowledge, which I defy the chains of Satan, or the world, to bind or restrain. They will cry out, Commotion, civil war, and bloodshed! and I answer, Come what will, men's souls must be saved; and under the present system of idolatry, men's souls can hardly be saved: though Satan should bring pestilence, famine, and sword, and threaten all their terrors in the train of the gospel, still the gospel must be preached; though the world should be shaken, and the earth be removed, the gospel must be preached. And why? because it is the ark of the salvation of men against all these judgments of the Lord, which come upon the earth, not by the gospel, but by that wickedness which the gospel alone can destroy. Who are those seducers that talk continually against the bold voice of truth, because of the

troubles that it may engender? They are the men who formerly said of Christ and His apostles, "Cæsar will come, and take away our state and nation." One greater than Cæsar came, and took away that state and nation for which they were afraid; even He whom they did silence and persecute with these intriguing speeches, which savoured of mercy, but were full of spitefulness; which were outwardly for mildness, but the covert of the blackest cruelty. And I will tell you this one word, that if the mediation of faithful ministers of truth interfere not between God and idolatrous Ireland, He will bring famine, and pestilence, and civil war again, as He hath already brought them; and they shall reach unto thy land also, O England, who hath power over that idolatry, and hast basely used it for thy political conveniency, instead of peopling every parish with a Boanerges, a son of thunder, who might make known the terrors of the Lord, and the coming doom upon all who adhere to the mother of harlots, and have traffic in her merchandise.

To the manly instruction of the ripened mind by preaching that royal ordinance of the kingdom, and satisfaction of their doubts, by appeal unto Scripture, that end of all controversy, I add, as my last means of relieving Ireland, the active and persevering education of the rising generation. God forbid that I should slide into the weak and helpless measure of these times, that the present generation must be given up, to whom we are sent; for this generation of the Church is God's minister to this generation of the world, and the next to the next; we are made to be the witnesses against those with whom we live and move and have our being, whom we shoulder and jostle in the arena of the present life. And another sign of our poverty and pusillanimity it is, this other measure of the times; we must give up the present generation, and work with the children. As if Paul should become a schoolmaster, and Peter an usher. Fy upon it, thus to have pulled your missionaries from their high estate, and made them school-keepers. Is Christ become feeble against men? Is Satan to have the men, and Christ the children? This comes of your low and paltry views of the missionary calling, into the right apprehension of which ye

will not be enlarged: ye cannot cope with wickedness in high places, and have crouched to stealthy methods of catching children, and insinuating truth into their early minds. But Schwartz was a missionary for men, and Elliot was; ay, and Martin was, and Xavier, and multitudes; but the nobility, the peerless nobility, and topping sovereignty of their office hath been lost, and our missionaries must turn their hands to every job of translating, corresponding, lecturing in colleges, and teaching in schools, yea, to mechanical arts, and professional occupations, instead of going forth in this day of second preparation, as did the Baptist, singing to the wilderness and waste of heathen peoples, "Every valley be exalted, every mountain be laid low, the crooked places straight, and the rough places plain, and let a highway in the desert be prepared for our God." And therefore I have put the preacher's office foremost in thus treating of means, and the education of children last; because it is my part, and your part as men, to be instant for this generation, and not to forget the generation that is to arise. For which innocent rising generation they will prepare such fetters as will bind them fast in error and darkness, if you interpose not your prompt and immediate help. That scheme of schemes for its utter folly, (whose only hopeful feature is its impracticability,) which I touched upon when shewing the range that this question had in the politician's mind, doth bespeak, in the quarters where such a commission was appointed—high quarters, I presume, though I know not, being utterly ignorant of the wheels of policy—such a feeling towards the youth of Ireland as utterly unmans me to think of it. And is it possible that the British Government, which hath seen the blessings upon a Protestant people, and the curses upon every Catholic and idolatrous nation of Europe, can propose, or entertain the proposal, that the Catholic children shall be sanctioned, yea, brought up, trained, and confirmed in the monstrous ignorance of their fathers? Make all your members of Parliament Catholics, and all your generals, and all your admirals; but, for the sake of God, do not appoint that the teachers of the children shall be Catholics: do not by public authority and holy law command

that the children of five millions of people shall be made inaccessible to light and knowledge. O Son of God, who loved little children, and desired them to come unto Thee, prevent that such a crime should be perpetrated by the law-givers of this land; or if at length the law and constitution of this land are to separate from the Church, or to set themselves against the Church, oh, forbid that any of Thy faithful and true servants should consort with or give countenance to it; but rather oppose and withstand it unto the end, and seek by all lawful means to counteract the scandal and shame of so heinous an act as this, of committing into the hands of the deceivers and the deceived the sole education of the youth of Catholic Ireland. Then are we resolved that they shall continue Catholic, and are taking measures that they shall continue so for ever. The chartered schools contained in them a good purpose and principle, though unwisely applied: that it was a thing to be desired and by all means sought after, that the children of the Catholics should be enlightened in the truth, and converted unto the Lord. The principle of the Kildare Street school, and those which have followed in its tract, was a much lower one—that only neutral ground should be occupied in the instruction of youth; which they carried into such rigorous effect, that I remember about the time that I was last in Ireland, the Catholic part of the committee rejected a book because it stated that the churches in Rome were resorted to as sanctuaries by those who had committed violent crimes. But the principle of this scheme, while it holds out the pretence of making peace by educating Protestants and Catholics in one school, doth truly prevent peace by making wider the breach, and marking more distinctly the features of distinction subsiding between Protestant and Catholic; yea, more, it will secure a great preponderance of Catholic masters and Catholic influence, in proportion to the preponderance of Catholic population. And this is what they propose to legalise, to make universal, to sanctify with the name of parochial education, and thereby to pull down the institutions already in operation for the instruction of the Irish people.

I do most fondly trust there is still left enough of vigour in our Protestant institutions to withstand the progress of such a measure, and to expose both the baseness of its principle, and the rudeness of its machinery; and I further trust it will be so much the more inducement to those who have the conversion of the blinded Catholics of Ireland at heart, to go to their object with no disguise; and with open face to confess what they have at heart, and not to conceal it for any reason; as I have said, I think there is too much of this policy, even in the conduct of those schools for which I plead. There is no spiritual man who can hope for the salvation of those who are depending upon the merit of their own works for salvation, and sanctifying in their heart all the sensualities of the Catholic superstition, and calling them holy. My office is null and void, if men can have salvation by their own works. The world are then all in the right, and need not be summoned and warned as those who are in a state of death and misery. If ye, then, have left the worldly city of Destruction on account of this error, how can ye look upon a people who have sanctified the error, and covered it with all idolatrous glory, and not wish them and their children delivered from the same? And how can ye undertake the education of their children, and not avow this to be your main object? If they ask you, whether your object is to proselytise from the Catholic faith, say, Yes, it is. For what avails the subterfuge, that the Catholic faith contains beneath it the true faith, seeing that the people see it not? The visible world contains under it all the truths of the invisible world—the knowledge of the true God; but men see it not. So the Catholic faith contains under it the true gospel; but the people see it not. If you say they do, I say, Come and see. Do they receive absolution from a priest? Do they penance? Worship they a wafer-god? Trust they in the intercession of saints? Yes, so they do in simplicity and sincerity; not with plausible explanations, but with unsophisticated faith. What, then, do you not wish them converted? If you do not, you are not worthy to be philanthropists to their cattle, much less teachers to their children. And if you wish them and their children converted, avow it; avow it before the world, and stand by

the issues. Though your income should fall ten in the hundred, or fifty in the hundred, what of that? the Lord will bless the remainder, and give it sevenfold fruit. Men must at length be plain and declare themselves: expediency will serve the turn no longer. They that are for Christ and His truth must be for nothing else; and they that are for Him and something else, must fall with that broken reed on which they have leaned their trust.

Therefore I offered myself to the office of advocating the cause of this Society, because I saw that of all the others the best spirit was found in this; and that before the Parliamentary Commission their witnesses did not fear to declare their conviction and their purpose to be the turning of the people from darkness to light. They have, therefore, become the great butt of the Liberal party; and it is their capital object to drive them to the wall. They are maligned, they are misrepresented; and as I stood forth for the Continental Society last year, bearing the reproach of the Christian world in respect of missions, so do I now stand forth for this Society, bearing the reproach of Christ, in respect of Irish education. It is honourable for them to have that reproach to bear. I feel it to be honourable to have the cause of the reproached to advocate, seeing it is for my Lord's cause they are reproached. And now it is to be determined, by this year's transactions, whether you will support these men that have stood, and are standing in the breach; whether there be still living amongst us enough of principle, enough of Protestant principle, to maintain this truly Protestant Society; or whether, even in the Church, these political wranglings about emancipation have undermined so the foundations of all that is peculiar to the faith of our churches, as to have made indifference the rallying word of the people of God also: then are they no longer the people of God, or they are come to the condition of the Laodicean Church, which was nigh unto rejection. But I firmly believe it will be made appear, by the firm support which this Society is destined to receive from all true spiritual men, and true Protestants, against Catholic errors and usurpations, that we are yet a people, that we are yet a nation, a holy nation, and a peculiar

people, to shew forth the glory of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

These three remedies I commend unto every one who hath a tender heart to the condition of Ireland, natural and spiritual, temporal and eternal: First, the labours of the ministry in preaching the living Word; second, the labour of all in circulating the written Word; and, lastly, the most strenuous exertion of all, especially the laymen, and those of weight and influence, in resisting the present measures contemplated for education, and maintaining those presently in operation, valuing them, not by their indifference to, but their enlightened zeal against, the mortal errors with which the people and their children are oppressed. These threefold labours of love I commend unto you in the Lord, with all prayer and diligence and perseverance, to be endured against misconstruction, ridicule, persecution, and contempt; and I trust this Society will continue to shew itself the most forward in maintaining the unequivocal principle, that it is religious ignorance and religious error which they fight against, and that they hope no reformation to be of any value which doth not acknowledge God as its beginning, and the salvation of the souls of men as its end. And now, with one word of apology for myself, and encouragement to my fellow-labourers in this ministry, I close my labours, consigning them to the blessing of Almighty God.

I am not ashamed nor afraid to speak those things: not ashamed, because they consent with the Word of God and sound reason, as I have shewn you at large in the body of this discourse; not afraid, because I am a minister of God's Word, appointed of the Church to declare the whole truth thereof. And, therefore, now that we are entering upon our spiritual feast, as it were the Pentecost of the Church, when all the tribes do gather up to this city of our Zion, I do exhort every minister who now heareth me, to be in like manner faithful and bold, and to assert the freedom of his office to declare unto all manner of societies, and in all manner of congregations, the whole mind of the Lord concerning that which is for the good of His Church. Let the mouth of the prophet be unmuzzled, let his tongue be unshackled; let

his heart know in what he has believed, and let his mouth declare it. Wait not for the smiles of approving dignitaries, nor the applause of approving people; but wait for the Spirit, and expect that Spirit, whom Christ hath pronounced to be with us, and to be unto us for a mouth and wisdom. The time is short, the visible Church is fast falling into apostasy of one kind or another. The dry-rot of infidelity, the rage of sectarianism, the decay of faith, the palsy of expediency, the vile leprosy of a religious world, are all in active operation under Satan's ministry; and what is there to oppose her withal but the incorruptible Word of truth from Christ's ministers. It doth not become you to float with the stream: yours is to stand upon the rock, and observe how the currents of the people set, and to give them warning. You are not faithful to the people when you go as they bid. They ought to go as you bid; and if they do not, either you are not Christ's priests, or they are not Christ's people. Sound the channel, consider the courses, calculate the known sailing of the Church, and guide the fervent bustle into which at this season she is thrown. This is the office of the shepherds of the people, of the watchmen of the city.

VI.

THE SPIRITUAL ECONOMY OF SCOTLAND.*

MEDITATING how I might best address myself to the duty to which I am now called, of preaching to a congregation chiefly composed of my countrymen gathered from the metropolis to patronise and support the Scottish Hospital for the relief of the poor and distressed of our nation, two subjects of discourse presented themselves to my mind, between which I remained long suspended in doubt. Whether I should make it the occasion of expounding to my countrymen the temptations to which they are liable in this metropolis from their peculiar character and circumstances, by the power and influence of which they have been scattered abroad, at Satan's will, like sheep without a shepherd, the great multitude of them lost to the gospel of grace and hope of everlasting life, through the fond pursuit of riches and of power,—those who have prospered, for the most part serving vanity and ambition,—those who have not prospered, soured with disappointment and envy, and oft turning their fine talents and excellent education against the truth as it is in Jesus,—all but a handful lost to the knowledge of their proper spiritual teacher, or any spiritual teacher, in their much business with money-making and courtesy. This is a topic which I have revolved in my mind these four years, and which, I trust, God will yet furnish me with an opportunity of handling in the full audience of my nation, but which at present I relinquish for one of a more large and comprehensive character, and which should be, if anything, still more near and dear to a Scotchman's heart, and to which I was led

* Preached on behalf of the London Scottish Hospital, April 1826.

by this consideration chiefly, that before you can understand the growth of a plant which hath been transplanted to another climate and soil, you must know the conditions from which it was taken, and the conditions into the midst of which it hath been removed. So, before we shall rightly comprehend the forms which the Scottish character assumes in this metropolis, and the diseases and derangements to which it is liable, we must study first the peculiarities of its condition in its own land, which I think are in general little understood and very imperfectly explained.

There prevails at this time a very high idea concerning the moral and intellectual and religious condition of our native land, which is the subject of boast everywhere amongst ourselves, and of compliment from our fellow-countrymen in the senate, in the pulpit, and in every other place,—as if we had till now pursued, without one backsliding step, a course of national improvement, and were pursuing it without anything to retard us or to make us afraid. Which proud confidence to redeem I have contended very much in private, by pointing out the sad declension of spiritual religion in the Church, and the formality of religious worship and knowledge which hath overspread large portions of the once fruitful and well-watered vineyard of the Lord, and the poverty or entire destitution of godly spirit which prevails in the ecclesiastical assemblies of our national Church, and the general or entire deadness of those who heretofore were the Lords of the Congregation,—the nobles, and dignitaries, and representatives of the land,—the almost universal scepticism of the intellect of the country naturalised in our university and ruling the literature of our once godly capital, now ambitious only of heathen honours; and when my countrymen would give no ear to these things, regarding them as idle tales, uncharitable, and unpatriotic censures, and have shewed me the eloquent and able men of which the Church could boast, I have not hesitated to declare that in them, the noblest timbers of the ship, the work of decay was fast manifesting itself, and that our preaching, take it at the best, hath hardly, for its spiritual character, a title to be compared with our former preaching, taken at the worst,—having declined away from an authorita-

tive declaration of the divine and spiritual word of God unto the faith of the people, into an intellectual demonstration of the literal word to the natural good sense and good feeling of the people, and tending to strengthen the conceit and sufficiency of that selfish nature to which it continually maketh the appeal, and calculated to raise up the intellect and sentiment and feeling of the natural man into a sufficient subject of the Divine good pleasure, instead of begetting a new life, and rearing up a new man, created after the image of God, which, nourished by the word of God's grace, and strengthened by the immediate presence and help of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, should withstand the natural man in all his natural courses, and overcome him, and bind him as a sacrifice to the horns of the altar, until death shall destroy his ineradicable sinfulness, and the resurrection shall raise him up again, a meet humanity for that divinity of nature which abideth in all the renewed children of God.

But all this argument, which in a thousand ways I have maintained in private with my countrymen, hath been against a steep and stiff mountain of opposition ; and unto this day I have made no progress in convincing almost any one. But nevertheless, being fully convinced myself, I have resolved to take my proper weapons in my hand at the present, and to undertake this great controversy, wherein the judgment of a whole nation concerning its true condition is concerned, whether it shall be of a stout and joyful heart before the Lord, or address itself to mourning and weeping, to confession and supplication and fasting; and I do it the more cheerfully, because I know that I am surrounded with men whom God hath made eminent for honour and influence in my native land, committing to their hands thereby a great and valuable trust, for which they shall be called to give account at the great day.

Now, though I disagree with the almost universal notion that the principles of the wellbeing of our country stand as strong as ever,—being convinced, on the other hand, that they have been in a state of close siege for more than half a century, and are now in imminent peril of falling,—I do not refuse to acknowledge, but do greatly rejoice to declare, that

the character of our people for understanding, morality, industry, and economy is far before that of any people on the face of the earth; and that we are, at this moment, scientific, inventive, ingenious, refined, and that beyond all former example, yea, and orderly and peaceable,—a nation without a mob, a people without a pauper class; while, at the same time, I assert that these are the harvests of a former sowing time, and that, as I perceive neither seed nor preparations for sowing again, this harvest will soon fail us. Or rather, a little to change my figure, these I perceive to be the fruits of a soil which was prepared and watered by spiritual workmen, who wrought in God's behalf and with God's instruments of husbandry; and, according to that means of divine and true wisdom, one generation hath sowed and another reapeth; but that the soil is well-nigh wrought out, and the seed exhausted, and the race of the spiritual workers all but died out; so that it will soon be seen, and is presently visible to the comprehensive eye, that the land is faint, and, like land long cropped without tending, and fallowing, and turning up a virgin soil to the cherishing sun, the very character of the plants and productions are changing, even though it be laboured as diligently, and to outward appearance be kept as clean, and as carefully sowed as before.

Now, perceiving that this is a great controversy for the wellbeing of a land, and that our native land, and such a native land as exalteth her peasantry to the level of freemen, I shall treat it carefully, and with my utmost ability, praying all help of the Lord; and forasmuch as city congregations are, both by physical and moral causes, incapable of any great strain of thought or attention, I shall divide it into several discourses, which I shall from time to time, as I shall be required, preach before my countrymen for their many public charities; to which I shall not be loath, as loving the poor of my country well, and ye, knowing the same, can come and hear, if so it please you, and if not, not, according as God moveth every man. And so I shall have fulfilled the little which I can do for that country to which under God I owe all, and the most of you who hear me owe all your honour and distinction, your wealth and power. And in this dis-

course I shall confine myself to the one object of opening up that culture of our people to which this distinction is due, and by which any people may be raised to the same moral and intellectual and social dignity—what I call the spiritual economy of Scotland, which continued from the Reformation till the middle of the last century, when the political economy began to supplant it, and our intellectual character to be regarded as the procreative principle of the nation; whereas, I assert, it was the spiritual cultivation that brought forth the intellectual, moral, social, and political character, and every other thing by which we are distinguished from other peoples of the earth.

The vulgar mind, by which I mean not the mind of the common and unlettered people, but of all the people who are not established in the faith and knowledge of things unseen and eternal, into the denial and neglect of which our scholars and wits, and economists and statesmen, have proceeded much further than the common people,—the mind of all such as are accustomed to judge by the sense or the understanding, acting by the sense, doth always look for the cause of any characteristic difference among nations to something outwardly visible and conspicuous; and because there is no apparent difference between Scotland and other countries but in her parochial system of education, it hath become the fashion and the philosophy and the political economy of the day to refer all that distinguishes our people from other peoples to the custom of parochial schools; which, as might be expected, is a very insufficient account of the matter. The parish school is a part in a great system of moral and spiritual economy which hath for two centuries pervaded that land, and must be allowed its share as one of the parts of the system, but alone and separate from the rest it would have very small influence indeed. The universities also are a part of the same system of ecclesiastical economy which was established in Scotland by the Reformers, and one of them has by its reputation and talent established a partial separation from the rest of the spiritual economy, and stood on the independent footing of learning and science for the last half century; and so little have the mere letters and learning of our schools to do with

the exalted character of our people, and so much to do with the sapping and undermining thereof, that if I were called upon to bear witness to the causes which have spoiled the glory of our national character, and mouldered the excellency of our spiritual and moral institutions, I would give by far the most conspicuous place in that bad pre-eminency to the infidel science, and vain philosophy, and meagre criticism, and French vanity which that school of letters and learning hath scattered over the land. And I am persuaded that if the other universities could attain the same emancipation from the ecclesiastical and spiritual system, low as that hath now fallen, and could communicate a kindred spirit to the lower academies and parish schools, it would come to pass that for the patient, pious, moral, and solid character that Scotland hath been distinguished for producing, you would have a race of proud, conceited, self-sufficient, ignorant talkers about words, without wisdom, despisers of spiritual religion, hateful of those that are honest, sincere, and godly, and enemies of one another; which features, indeed, I begin to perceive already developing themselves in the character of the Scottish nation, through the formality of our ancient spiritual institutions.

I say then, and shall by God's blessing make it good, that our Scottish character, so far famed for piety and principle, for patience and prudence, was produced, and is partially maintained by a system of spiritual economy which pervades the people of the lower class, and from which the higher class could hardly escape, whereof the character was to consider the souls of the people, the spirits of men, as the all in all, and the outward things—the conveniences of life, the wages of labour, the price of commodities, the political privileges, and the bodily accommodations—as mere circumstantials, which would fall into their proper place if only the spirit could be quickened to a sense of its dignity and its duties. That, you will observe, is the very reverse of the present system of political economy, which considers things as the all in all, and the spirits of men as not to be cared for, but sure to provide for their own dignity and duty, if only you will feed, clothe, lodge, and recreate the body sufficiently.

This spiritual economy, which existed and doth still partially exist in Scotland, had many provisions and arrangements which wrought together to the one end of quickening the souls of men by the seed of the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. The first and chiefest of which was its preaching of the gospel, which, I may surely say, was in Scotland, within the last half century, altogether another thing from what is known by that name in any other country that I have heard or read of. It came to pass through the hard and rough usage which the Scottish Church met with,—first from James VI., then from Charles I., then from Cromwell, then from Charles II., then from James II., and occupying a complete century of cruel torture and bloodshed,—that the clergy of the Presbyterian Scottish Church were driven upon the people, as a refuge from the storm and a hiding-place from the tempest of the terrible ocean; while the people, by this fourfold storm of principalities and powers which fell in upon their dearly-beloved Church, and the many questions and subtle arguments with which their rooted affection thereto was sought to be undermined in the hands of a Leighton and a Burnet, were so long kept the umpires of every great religious question, that their wits were sharpened, their intellect strengthened, and their faculty of observance cultivated in a way wonderful to those two very learned and pious prelates. And here I must observe, against the Episcopalian writers and novelists who have sought to cast the scorn of vulgar ridicule, or to fasten the censure of malignant humours upon these stout resistances and masterful arguments of the Scottish people during the seventeenth century, that they do not well by holy truth or the memory of the sainted dead, so lightly and so partially to treat a contest which was not waged merely for the Episcopal or the Presbyterial government, but whether a spiritual system or a merely political system should govern the nation. And so much do I feel convinced that this question is worthy of all controversy and sacrifice, that I am here free to declare that, if again it should come into question whether we should retain our spiritual system, meagre as it is now grown, or be wholly under a system of infidel or indifferent policy, I would deem that a better

cause for resistance and sternest controversy than are the Greek insurrections, and Spanish and Piedmontese and Neapolitan revolutions, with the French Revolution, their mother, to boot, which we have seen these thirty years, and which the enlightened and liberal of the nineteenth century have hailed as such glorious occasions of resistance and war.

Mark ye well, then, how this spiritual system of Scotland, by which I set such store, grew out of the like nourishing root of popular preachings. The preachings in those times were not the heady and fiery effusions of hot-brained firebrands, but the able discourses of learned and pious and ingenious and well-tried men, who had not much time, it is true, for writing or publishing their writings save to the ear of the clearest minds, and writing them in the book of the Lord's everlasting testimony and in the character of a people which, not in the third or fourth, but in the sixth and eighth generation, defies you to find its parallel—I say not amongst the same class of peasants, cotters, and farmers, for that is impossible, but among the middle and higher classes of other lands. For we who in this city, and over the wide world, sit in council with statesmen and princes, and are of the chief merchants, and in the assemblies of the notable and the learned, are for the most part come of the peasantry and of the farmers, who in other countries are esteemed to be chiefly born to till the soil or to conserve its fruits. I say these preachers, by what we have of their writings preserved, and by all that hath been lately made to appear of their biographies by M'Crie and others, were men of a deep and enlarged soul, conversant with the original languages of Scripture and with the history of the Church in all ages, and who have left a seed of divinity behind them in their writings, but above all in the living souls of their people, which giveth them a high degree in the Church of Christ. I am not old, and was born in the twilight of gospel light in Scotland; but I can bear testimony, and have borne it before learned divines and prelates of this Church, which hath a title to be esteemed both learned and devout, that the prayers which I have heard in the Scottish cottages, extempore from their inflamed hearts, passed far beyond anything that I had heard from any priest, and rivalled oft the pathos

and sublimity of the Scriptures themselves. And for their large comprehension and logical accuracy in Christian doctrine, no one who hath conversed with the gray-headed fathers of the land can have a doubt. And hear them examine their households and their children, and hear them discourse by the evening fire, or in their goings forth on the Sabbath morn over hill and dale to the parish church,—hear them hand down the traditions of former piety and suffering, and sharpen one another in their Christian warfare by the many examples with which every part of the country is sanctified, confirmed by the mossy graves and the gray stones and the inaccessible retreats of the martyrs, and the family legends dear to memory, —and hear them, as they come home at evening, enter at large into the discourse which they have heard, and improve its various passages, and recount a thousand recollections to which it gave rise of like discourses heard in other times and places; —oh, how dear those scenes are to my memory! When yet a child, or little more than a child, I walked many miles to hear the discoursing of a most reverend father, whose hoary image is now before me; and as we went, another and another came dropping in, till we formed a sweet society under the smiling eye of the Sabbath morn, talking words of grace and consolation and power over the soul, which God did bless with an especial blessing. And on their return, ere they parted on their several ways, and scattered over the moor to their solitary dwellings, to see them assemble in the hollow of a woody dell, and there call upon the most aged and revered of the company to conduct their worship,— the melody of their voices mingling with the tempest-like rushing of the winds in the tops of the pine-trees, its swelling upon the wind and cheerful echo amongst the solitary places which it blessed, the solemn utterance of prayer amidst the stillest silence of the earth, and under the open eye and ear of Heaven;—the man that can make a jest of these things is a fiend and no man; the man that can hold them of little value in a state, and opposeth them as hurtful and dangerous, will soon bring the state to the brink of ruin. And I would consider myself no less wicked than such a wit, no less wicked than such a statesman, if I were to teach these holy things

after a political and sentimental manner, which I do mention as having been witnessed by me in that twilight of Scottish religion and character, whereof the strength and glory gave occasion to that spiritual system of husbandry concerning which I discourse, as opposite to the political system which now governs everything, and will demolish everything, if it hath not already demolished everything that in this state was built for God, and for eternity, and for the bulwark of men.

The groundwork of the spiritual economy of Scotland now breaking up lay in the spiritual doctrines diffused abroad by the earnest and copious preaching of the spiritual word of God. The preachers were to that system what the political economists now at work are to the system of political economy which is supplanting the spiritual economy;—the Adam Smiths of the last age bear to that system of sense which is developing itself in our national counsels and everywhere exactly the same relation which the Reformers of Scotland bore to the system of faith; and our reviewers, magazine-men, and newsmongers—gentlemen of the press, as they designate themselves—stand in the place of the persecuted ministers who were driven in upon the people by five reigns of persecution and distress, and translated to the spiritual understanding of the people, and applied to their spiritual condition, those great truths of reformation which here in England were stayed in that process of dispensation by the prelatical and arbitrary Stuarts, yea, by high-handed and jealous Elizabeth, and which, being hindered from their natural field, the world, were cultivated in the universities, and produced those mighty confutations of the Papal superstition which are to be found in the writings of Hooker, Jewell, Mede, Moore, and other divines, who would many of them have become Latimers and Luthers if the spirit of prelacy and power had not hindered. From that diffusion it is perfectly amazing to what a pitch of spirituality the faith of the Scottish people arose. They were able to use, and did thoroughly appropriate to their daily use, the whole scope of the Calvinistic ideas, interpreting them spiritually, which I hold to be the highest attainment of a divine. To apprehend the love of God from all eternity, and Christ's dedicating Him-

self to our salvation from all eternity,—to follow the revelation of the promise, and the various dresses which it put on,—of traditionary revelation, of a natural institution, of an incarnation of Divinity, of a pure spiritual economy, naked of all clothing, and waiting for a glorious clothing of power and majesty when He shall come again,—and see them only as the buds and leaves, and flowers and fruits of that heavenly vine whose root and principle of life is in God's eternal purpose and the Son's eternal covenant, whose divine appearances and various modes alone are in love,—in order, through our temporary faculties of a fallen nature, to come at the immortal spirit which is within us, and cherish it into divinity of life by communion with the eternal spiritual springs of life which the gospel reveals;—verily, verily I say unto you, this is the highest and most uplifted theme of human knowledge and feeling, which produceth the noblest, most enlarged, and holy form of human character which this present evil world can entertain. For from the bosom of such a superterrestrial faith, and such heavenly knowledge, doth spring within the soul the continual consciousness of being chosen from the worldly multitude, and raised above the slime and mud, and smoke and dusty turmoil of the earth, to be a servant of God and faithful witness of Jesus Christ, and a dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit, to offer continual sacrifices of prayer and praise and new obedience. While Christian professors are lingering in the region of the natural understanding, doting about questions of evidence, and arguments of outward advantage and expediency, and controversies of doctrine, having their origin and their end in the schools,—or while they are lingering in the region of the natural feeling, presenting certain fine pictures of the morality of the gospel, of Christ's personal character, of His perfect and finished manhood, of sentimental religion, and beautiful pictures of the fancy and imagination; and while thus the natural aspect of Christianity is the theme of preaching with the minister, and the object of attention with the people, oh, it is a poor, poor church they keep together!—a sad intermixture of hay, wood, and stubble with precious stones, silver, and gold, even as at this day is manifested in all communions of the Christian Church,

both in England and in Scotland. But I tell you, when those doctrines of the Spirit—those Calvinistic ideas against which our prelates take arms as little better than atheism, and which our northern divines are vainly attempting to render to the crude natural understanding, and to the unsanctified natural heart—have the hold and mastery of the preaching of the Christian ministry, and the sway over the spirits of the people, being received by faith, and beloved for the sake of their redemption and regeneration and consolation, and victory over flesh and blood which they have given unto the spirit;—then I say unto you that this people are fledged for ethereal flights of the soul, and able to hold converse with the invisible and incomprehensible God, and they are armed with endurance of all adversity and affliction, and they are inspired with the love of all excellence, and furnished with the fulfilment of all duty; and such a chosen generation, and such a holy nation, and such a royal priesthood, and such a pastored people cannot die; they cannot yield up the ghost under any damp or exhalations of a putrid world, whereof they are the salt; and a handful of them is like the fire of heaven, which descendeth and setteth the wild forests in one perpetual blaze. And Scotland heretofore was full of such a seed; and I trust there is still a seed of such men in the ground of my dear mother-country and fatherland. How pressing, penetrating, and far-shining, and very mighty are such a people, let me tell you by one story, which hath no lower authority than the President De Thou. The Albigenses, against whom the crusade was preached in the time of our Richard Cœur-de-Lion, were cut off and scattered and peeled by the chivalry of Europe, until, being cooped up in one of the fortresses of Languedoc, engirdled with steel and murderous men, the bread and the water having failed, they betook themselves in the dead of night to explore a subterraneous passage, which carried them, their wives, and little ones full beyond the lines of the enemy, whereby, seeing occasion, they fled and dispersed themselves over the earth. A handful in all, they wandered abroad: some to the valleys of Piedmont, and formed or fed the Vaudois churches; others to Picardy, where they became the famous Picards, the seed of the

Huguenots; others to Bohemia, where they became the seed of the protomartyrs, and of Ziska, mighty and holy warriors; others to Saxony, where they waited for Luther's appearing; and three brethren to Scotland, where they abode in the west, maintaining the faith of the Lollards, and affording a refuge to Wickliffe's followers, when they were dispersed by the persecution that arose in the time of the fourth Edward. Such forests grew in all Europe out of that handful of incorruptible seed, when it had been winnowed by the storm of Papal wrath from all its chaff. Now I tell you that your prelatical persecutions of Scotland made our forefathers such a set of men; and because they were not allowed to disperse themselves abroad,—for ye cooped them up in prisons, and sent them into the inhospitable plantations,—therefore the seed, being confined, did fertilise Scotland, and take such a hold of her people as to raise them into that spiritual temper of knowledge and feeling in theological truth which formed the substratum and soil in which the spiritual system took root, and by which it was nourished to that grandeur of which the sear and wintry growth doth still astonish political and worldly men; though it be no marvel to such as know the power of the gospel to make those who were not a people to become the people of God, and a holy nation, and a chosen generation, and a royal priesthood, to shew forth the virtues of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

The first-fruit of this large diffusion and rooted faith in spiritual truth was to furnish from the body of the people, for the purposes of ecclesiastical discipline in each parish, a goodly number of elders, who, with the minister, took in hand the charge of the people, dividing each parish into small convenient portions, over which one of these men had the spiritual superintendence; so that when the eldership was assembled, they had under their knowledge the character and behaviour of every family and every individual within the land. To political men this looks a dangerous and fearful system of espionage; and I am sorry to see that some of our vile, self-seeking, renegade countrymen, who in this metropolis handle the pen against the honour of their mother

Church, have addressed themselves of late to rake from the dust of other times the records of the Scottish kirk-sessions, that should have been sacred from such profanation, in order to demonstrate the tyrannical authority, as the witlings call it, which they took over the consciences and conduct of the people. But these men make out a very poor case for their profanation, and the very best case for the Scottish sessional discipline, by shewing the sadly debauched and dissolute state of manners upon which this system came into operation, and which in the course of a few years it utterly abolished, as all historians testify, spreading during the Commonwealth such a fear of God and awe of godliness that there was one universal cry of misery amongst the publicans and alehouse-keepers, and others who minister to the riotous and luxurious inclinations of men, until, at the Restoration, iniquity setting in like a flood, by royal permission and courtly patronage, drove virtue and holiness to the wilds, to herd with the beasts of the earth and with the fowls of heaven. The kirk-session of Scotland, next to the preaching of the word, hath been its greatest blessing, and, beyond all courts of law and statutes of justice, hath abolished vice and wickedness and profanity; insomuch that even the blackguard ribaldry of our northern wits is overawed by the character of the Scottish elder, to which they have paid some of the finest tributes that mere sentimentalism can bring forth. If your select vestries in England, which take cognisance merely of the temporalities of the poor, be esteemed of you so highly, what esteem doth not Scotland owe to her kirk-sessions, which have abolished poor-rates altogether—yea, and almost abolished the order of the poor, which we are promised to have always,—and which were comforters to the people, and the reporters of their temporal and spiritual distresses unto the pastor, the guardian of their delicacy and honour, their counsellor and adviser, the composer of their quarrels, the terror of evil-doers, and the praise of them that do well? Of which office you have no parallel in England, as I may say you have no such men as, being farmers or cottagers, shall have, in their spiritual capacity, the reverence of the gentry, yea, and of the nobility, and be free to fulfil in their families

all their spiritual functions. Yet so sweet doth the odour of that office still live in the unpropitious atmosphere of this metropolis, that it is with the utmost difficulty we can get most to take that office upon them, all conceiving themselves unworthy of its honour and unequal to its duties. I have heard my mother tell that her grandfather—who was minister of a burgh on the Border, now discriminated by Burns our poet for its intemperance—used, with one of his elders, to take evening walks through the little town, in order to hear whether the voice of worship was lifted up in every dwelling; and if not, they would enter and deal with the people concerning the danger of a prayerless family. I have heard my father tell that, in the early mornings of harvest, while he and his brothers still lingered in bed, weary with the labour of reaping their father's fields, his father and mother would rise an hour before the earliest, granting mercy to their weaklier children, while, like Job, they offered the morning sacrifice for themselves and their family. And time would fail me to tell you what I have gathered from sure tradition, and seen surviving amongst the elders and heads of families of our blessed Church; for the elders were not rare or difficult to be had, but every head of a family was an elder. And what shall I say now, but that they bear the stamp of it to this day, in their wise and reverend aspect, in their devout and most respectful carriage unto all, in their well-ordered homes and well-thriven families, in their far-famed children, than whom a worthier, or a hardier, or a braver, or a more heroic race neither Greece nor Rome have ever known, although the whole character of these peoples went to adventure and war; whereas it was but as it were the accompaniments and lovely ornaments and earthly fruits of that pious character which the spiritual institutions of our fathers did cultivate.

The eldership taking upon them the office of counsellors and judges, of censors and comforters in this spiritual system, and fulfilling, without corporal or capital punishment, or any painful rigours of law, all the offices which your justices of the peace and magistrates, yea, and judges, do in these days, and almost making their offices a sinecure, the next part of our spiritual system was in the duties of the head of a family,

whom our Church regarded as the priest of his household, taking them for the only sponsors of their children, and requiring at their hands the proficiency of their children in the knowledge of things spiritual and divine; so that not the schoolmaster, but the father and mother, were responsible for their children to the pastor and to the church, who had admitted them thereto by the sacrament of baptism. Till lately a Sabbath school was not needed, and was not known in Scotland, and even now an English Sunday school is unknown within the bounds of our Church. To secure in heads of families a sufficiency of knowledge for the fulfilment of these imperative duties, it was the pastor's constant custom to examine every soul within his bounds once every year, or to examine the one year and visit the other, on which occasions I can assure you there was a more frequent desire on the part of the people to plunge into the depths of divinity than to skim the surface, as may be seen by the Larger Catechism which was the text-book in these witenagemotes of the parish. And the head of a family, besides morning and evening worship, in which I have never, even in these times, known a form to be used, took it upon him on the Sabbath evening to examine all his children, men-servants, and maid-servants, as I have oft proved, in the subject which the minister had handled; and what a freshness have I seen of memory and of judgment around the evening fire of the Scottish cottage! And let me tell you that such a ponderous book as Henry's Commentary is no stranger amongst them for the settlement of disputes and the illustration of texts. And oh, their prayers!—the real sublimity of their prayers, their use of prophetic language, their spiritual application of the Psalms, their range of scriptural quotation, not by rote or by sound, like your uneducated minister, but by the spirit seeing and appropriating its right and proper language in the written word! Now, let your political economists learn the reason why the population of Scotland kept always much within the mark of comfort,—it was because of the high duties which were felt to belong to the head of a family, and the holy feeling which was spread abroad thereof, and the constant restraint of appetite in which the people were trained up from their very youth. This post-

dated marriage, on the side of the men, I should think, upon an average ten years, and on the part of women six or seven years, beyond what is common both in England and Ireland, by which the very mould of men hath a certain fulness and strength in the north, and unsensual character about it, which is seldom to be found elsewhere.

And now, before leaving the effects of this system upon the men, I have to add a remarkable fact upon a large scale, to shew you the proof of what I have said concerning the spiritual dignity and character of the people. About the middle of the last century the prejudice which always subsists in the natural man and his institution against the spiritual man and his institution began to develop itself among the higher classes in Scotland, into whose hands the patronage of the churches was cast by an extreme violation of the Union, so that they desired to promote men whose theology was after the pattern of Tillotson and the Arminian divines, and savoured little of the spiritual doctrines from which the spiritual system of our economy arose. And while this unspiritual temper was engendering amongst the patrons of the Scottish churches, there was spreading in the universities, especially of Edinburgh, a great admiration of the puny literature and meagre morals of the essayists of Queen Anne's time, to which the doctrines of the fathers and the regenerative morality of the Scriptures were postponed as enthusiasm; and fostered by Drs Blair and Robertson, and such other clerical literati as were then thought the constellation of the north, and by many are still regarded so, but most of all fostered by the spirit of the country, which was wretched and ungodly in all respects, there was engendered a school of preachers, for I cannot call them divines, and they are entitled to "preachers" chiefly because they wrote "Reverend" before their names, for preachers of Christ's gospel they surely were not;—which pulpit gentlemen, being very courteous and polite, and current with the times, became great favourites with the gentry and nobility, and were promoted with great expedition to the vacant churches. Now mark what I am to say in proof of the high character of our peasantry: that I never knew an instance, and I believe an instance was never

known, in which these gentle preachers found favour with our people. In England the appointment of a minister is little thought of or cared for by the people; but in Scotland it was as their all in all. He was their guide to heaven, he was their comforter on earth, he was the ruling elder of the parish, he was the patriarch of the families, the breaker of the bread of life; and these things to a spiritual people are the chief ends of their being. Whence it came to pass that the people were in wild dismay and great horror when they began to be invaded with witlings for divines, and squires of stately dames for servants of the living God, and companions of the one or two great men of the neighbourhood for companions of the household of faith and the fellowship of the saints. In no one instance, I say, could this moderate divinity be made palatable to them. The godlessness of it disgusted them. And the ignorance of these children offended the gray-headed wisdom of the fathers. Oh, what silent and solitary grief have I witnessed, what mourning and lamentation, over the declined condition of the pastorate and ministerial office! With what pangs they were forced to rend themselves away from that Church for which their fathers had shed their blood! The persecution of the sword and famine seemed nothing compared with this famine of the bread of life which they had to endure. Now indeed the wolf had attained his object, and was devouring the sheep within the fold, under the disguise of a good shepherd. This came of the violation of our holy covenant of Union. Oh, ye wicked rulers! we had purchased the abolition of patronage by a sea of blood, and in solemn union we had it ratified, not only as an article, but as the basis of a union, and in five short years ye bereft the house of God of her godly order, whence all confusions have sprung, and whence, amongst other things, Scotland hath been the nurse of that infidelity which will yet lay the axe to the root of your darling constitution! Ye got men appointed over the patriarchal race of Scottish peasants who had not the hundredth part of the intelligence of one of them. And their intelligence continued to grow wild for want of spiritual pruning, and see to what it hath come, giving birth to the leaders and abettors of this present

race of infidel writers and infidel opinions, which will yet rifle every sanctuary and abolish every security. But this hath been a long time of effecting. For at the first the people separated themselves from the Church, and constituted secessions, upon no ground but the grievance of this patronage of fashionable striplings for grave, spiritual men. And it was not till near a century had elapsed that the intelligence which is native to a spiritual soil, and I may say is the after-crop of wild oats which ariseth where the spiritual husbandry is neglected, grew up and spread far and wide, and penetrated to the very corners of our beloved land; whence arose these shoals of infidel scribblers who minister garbage to the thousand tastes of this metropolis.

And thus the Scottish Church having provided for her men began to provide for her children also, and pressed upon Parliament, without ceasing, the institution of parish schools, the liberal scheme of which was one of Knox's many noble devices for his country's weal, which she, always ungrateful to her spiritual worthies, hath ill repaid. But the needy and avaricious noblemen of those times stripped both Church and people of their undisposable property, and sent both priests and people a-begging for anything they cared about them. And when they had, without their help, in so far accomplished their liberal device, these same nobles broke us upon the wheel of persecution; and but that we got a breathing-time between the Revolution and the cursed Act of the 10th of Queen Anne, restoring patronage, both Church and parish schools might, for any interest the higher classes did take in them, have been as they are at this day in Ireland—a political abuse and desolation, not a spiritual husbandry. By all which spoliation of the rights of the Church, methinks, our nobles have not enriched themselves, but, so far as I know, are in general poorer than the nobility of this land; from which I think our liberal economists might take a lesson, not to meddle with the revenues of another Church, after which their fingers itch so sadly. There is a *Noli me tangere*, a *Nemo me impune lacesset*, written around the property of the Church which they had better not defy.

And if the Church hath used her property unbecomingly, she hath incurred no debt, and accumulated no burdens upon her children; so that the state hath, it seems to me, little reason to find fault with her. But to return. By the grace of God, through poverty and persecution, the Church wrought out this boon for the children, that they should have a sufficient education at their door, not by charity, but at a moderate charge. And the heritors to that effect endowed the parish with a school and schoolhouse, a small garden, and a moderate salary of about £20 a year. And the presbytery examined the character and learning of the man whom the heritors elected, which election the presbytery confirmed. And the schoolmaster became vested in the dignity of his office, looked up to as the second man of the parish, generally clerk to the kirk-session, and precentor in the church, and when weight of years and experience qualified him, advanced to the eldership. His school was visited once a year by the presbytery, and by the minister of the parish whenever he pleased; the books taught being the Catechism, the Proverbs, the New Testament, and the Bible, and, latterly, a Collection from the most approved English authors; writing also to all, and arithmetic and bookkeeping to those who wished them; so also Latin, and in some cases Greek. But our Reformers contemplated, besides the parish schools, grammar schools in the towns, where the youth intended for the learned professions might be initiated into classical learning, logic, and other branches, before going up to the universities. And many of these schools became so famous that professors were wont to prefer them to the university chairs. In which grammar schools the sons of the nobility and gentry were educated, as well as those of most pregnant parts from amongst the lower orders of society. And if time permitted me, I could say a deal upon this link which our Reformers interposed between the parish schools and the university. There were commonly two teachers, the one the master and the other the doctor, and both of them were generally connected with the Church. The four universities, again, were chiefly for the learned professions, and taught all the learning

and literature of the time, being nothing short of the most learned in Europe, as may be seen from M'Crie's "Life of Melvil."

Oh, it is a very beautiful thing in the eye of a philosopher to contemplate the condition into which that motherly Church of Scotland hath brought the education of the children of her people, that the poorest of them shall, in respect to spiritual and Divine knowledge, and almost in respect to universal knowledge, through the means of parish libraries, be brought upon a level with the highest. And to the sentimental moralist it is the sweetest sight in nature to behold the children of a nation going forth under the opening day to the school of a well-principled and well-educated instructor, and at eventide returning to their father's roof and mother's careful tenderness. And to the Christian it is a thing to boast his soul in, to know that the youth of a nation are trained to know the doctrines and statutes of the gospel, as they are unfolded in that Catechism of our Church which, compared with those of these parts, is as the oak to the sapling. And all this without almsgiving or needy help of others, but by the savings of the industrious and honest people. No clothing societies, no charitable foundations, no free schools, no badges of poverty, nor regimental suits of charity,—all the offspring of the good husbandry of a spiritual people. And such a feeling spread over the country concerning education that, to give an instance, in my native parish, where there was but one man who could not read, his name passed into a byword, mothers saying to their idle children, "If ye be not diligent, ye will be such as he."

But it makes me angry and sad to hear our Radical politicians draw praise from this beautiful plant of piety, and set forth at their vain feasts that the excellence of it consisted in the sons of all ranks being educated together, so that every one felt himself upon a level,—the son of the peasant and the son of the gentleman. I am glad, indeed, to see all the youth of the parish educated together, because it begets that early sympathy of kindness which may make them love and respect each other in their various places and relations; but their republican and levelling notion I utterly abjure for

the system of Scottish education, and deny that it hath such effects. It may humble the pride of the embryo squire, and make the son of the master forget his superiority to the son of the servant. And so far forth it is well. But, combined as it is with religious duty, and forming part of a spiritual system, it hath altogether an opposite effect from that which these subverters argue, and doth sweeten the necessary distinctions of human society, not embitter them with vain emulations, as every one doth know who hath had any experience therein. The claim of an old schoolfellow is recognised by Scotsmen in every region of the earth, not as engendering strife of equality, but as engendering claim of help and assistance from one to another. And through the channel of the good associations thus formed, many are the sons of humble station who have ascended to the highest and most honourable places in the state.

But to return from this digression of my heart, much pained and wounded by the ignoble use which this generation hath made of our most holy men. If in the seventeenth century our universities fell off, how, before Heaven, could letters have thriven in the midst of the fire and sword with which you destroyed the bowels of our land? It was not ten years of usurpation, as in England, but ten times ten years did you trample under foot the piety and the learning of our Church. And do ye wonder, O vain men, that the tender and delicate and elegant flower of learning would not grow under such rude blasts, in such a blood-boltered soil, and under such rough pruning? When it was the maxim of our kings that there was no hope of Scotland till all between the Borders and the two firths was a forest again, oh, do ye wonder, ye men of England, that our fathers, having built up a more stately building of holiness than the sun of heaven shone upon, should forsake all for its defence, and gird themselves with rude weapons to beat back the chivalry of kings who came to assail it? The crusade against the Albigenses was a crusade of gallant knights and courtly squires, but the crusade against my fathers was a crusade of wicked renegade priests, of greedy despotic nobles, of red-handed cavaliers, and the savage Highland host—such a four-

fold combination as never before laid waste the vineyard of the Lord. And, ye men of England, who admire and glory that the ancient aborigines of this land did rise as one man, when the Roman emperor in his haughty state did say that there would be no peace in Britain till the inhabitants thereof were transported to other climes, can ye not admire that our fathers did make such strenuous efforts to maintain that spiritual city and community which these perjured kings sought to deprive them of? Ye do not well to take amusement at expense of such noble-mindedness, ye whose fathers would not draw their weapons against the troops of the Covenant, but obliged their king to make peace with them on honourable conditions. There hath been no event in this realm, no, not one, which acted so powerfully upon its future fortunes as that very Covenant, which was the religious Magna Charta of England. The Magna Charta was the deed and instrument of the noble spirit of England against the arbitrary temper of royalty; and the Solemn League and Covenant was the deed and instrument of the pious spirit of Scotland and England against the papal temper of royalty. Let them stand together, the work of the barons at Runimede and the work of the General Assembly of Glasgow, as the only two events worthy to be compared with one another since the Conquest.

But, further, it is necessary that you regard the whole provision for youth as the scheme and the care of the Church. The scholastic economy of Scotland is the child of the spiritual economy; and the turn for reading and thought, the speculation of the mind, and adventure of the person, which our youth have got, is not so much the product of the parish school as of the whole system. I know what is to be found in the parish school and in the town academy, having been reared in both, and having been charged with the care of both for many years; but all that is to be had there is a poor and beggarly account of what a spirit is heir to which is born within the realm of Scotland, and with the rank of a farmer in that realm. It is the circulating medium of knowledge, and the atmosphere of moral worth, which breeds and nourishes the young spirit. The

school is, at best, an irksome task, and the lessons that are read there are oft not much remembered; and the schoolmaster is too wearied with his labours to have leisure for beautiful moral arrangements, or for impressive moral instructions, and from one another's company boys will acquire anything but good lessons, if there be not some strong restraining and powerfully-moulding influence over them when they are out of school. O my brethren, it is under our father's roof, and by the strongly-marked characters of our fathers and mothers, and by the companies and conversations which we are accustomed to hear around our firesides at home, and the firesides of our acquaintances abroad, that our character is formed. Who knows not the copious discourse, the well-sustained argument, the sharp wit, and caustic humour which circulates around the firesides of the Scottish peasantry? It is as much a characteristic of the people of Scotland to go through the burn, or down the glen to their neighbour's house, in order to enjoy the "crack" by the fireside, as for the English peasantry to adjourn to the alehouse, or the Irish peasantry to their sparring or quilting camps. And if you would wish to know what a state of innocent intercourse there is between the sexes, read our songs; and if you would wish to know what sharp intellect there is amongst our men, read our dialogues; and if you would wish to know what a body of tradition there is in every family, read our tales, which are but a gleaning of the fields; so that, out of my own recollection, I shall engage to supply many volumes to any one who will be at the pains to take them down; and I have been no collector, and a poor retainer of what I have heard. But wait; why wander I from my spiritual text? If you would know the moral atmosphere under which our children grow, go and witness their silence, their thirsty ears and mute tongues, in the presence of their elders, and their reverend carriage in the presence of their superiors; their fine feeling towards their parents; their deathless affection for one another; their fond esteem of their kindred to the remotest degree; their worship of God by night and morning; their regularity at school; their reading of all manner of books, and repeating of all manner of traditions; their visits to

ruined towers and ivy-mantled castles of the days of yore; their help reached forth, the while, to their father and their mother, in their morning and evening labours; their roamings up and down amongst the mountains and by the streams; their superstitious dread of haunted places, and sense for ever of spiritual presences; the number of adventurers returned home, every one able and willing to recount his toils by flood and field; the number of kinsmen in foreign parts who are ever wishing tidings and sending help to their friends, and keeping awake the curiosity and knowledge and adventure of the youth; the multitude who have risen to eminence and wealth and renown, whose names are not suffered to slumber on the shelf; the great number of ingenious and inventive men spread around; the songs of love and satire which every village will furnish you, when occasion offereth;—these, and a thousand other things, which I call the floating capital and circulating medium of principles and talent, which are necessary to serve the daily purposes of intercourse under such a spiritual system of economy as I have discoursed of, do draw forth the minds of young men and young women to that wisdom and sagacity, and impress upon their character that dutifulness, prudence, and trustworthiness, which your philosophers of the visible, your wise men who have eyes in their heads to look at outward objects, but no eyes in their souls to perceive spiritual causes, attribute to the parish school,—whereas, I say, the parish school, good as it is in its place, hath a very secondary influence, which all admire in our country, and which is nothing but the efflorescence of that spiritual system whereof I have discoursed. To such a degree do these spiritual and invisible causes operate, that it really is of almost no importance, in respect to intelligence, in what class of the people a man be born, so that you do not rise above the rank of a farmer; for beyond that I say not, but with that, whether you be of the tradesman, or the mechanic, or the farmer, or the cotter, or the pauper, who are hardly to be classed, it maketh no difference. They are all intelligent, not to say intellectual men, cultivated according to the talents which God hath given them, and using their talents well, according to the occasions furnished them, not in actual life

but in the subjects that come under the consideration of their minds,—capable of accommodating themselves to new manners and new places and new occupations, and to discharge any office of trust or superintendence. And I will conclude this part of my discourse with what may seem to some extreme, but which doth no more than represent the force and strength of my conviction, that if I were called upon, with my present knowledge and feeling, to fix upon the condition, in the moral map of the world, from the royal estate of the King of England downwards, where I would prefer to be born, for the intellectual, moral, and spiritual advantages thereof, I would say, Let me be born in Scotland, with the rank of the farmer, and take my place with the multitude and my chance with the multitude; for I am convinced that, with the general temptations, I shall there enjoy the greatest advantages to help me to a sound understanding, dutiful disposition, and manly character, devout spirit, and godly conversation. For I should find there industry and economy, patience under privations, a greater desire of helping than being helped, the fear of God, and the reverence of His ordinances; a well-ordered household, affectionate and faithful parents, and strongly-cemented brotherhood,—which things I hold to be as milk to the infant spirit. And I should find schooling enough for my wants as a member of Christ's Church and the world's community. And if I had genius for anything higher, I should find in the minister, and other worthy men, sufficient patronage, and, without them, in my own character I should find resources to find my way to the means of cultivating my gifts, and turning them to the best account for my own and human wellbeing. All this, and much more that time would fail me to tell of, would I find within the degree of a Scottish farmer in any parish of Scotland; which advantages I should have small chance of in this country of England, or amongst the nobles of any land, or amongst its gentlemen, or amongst its scholars, or amongst its merchants, where, though there be some peculiar blessing to them all that they may be comforted, yet, brethren, as you well do know, there are such excitements to intemperance, vanity, and ambition,—such an atmosphere of hollow forms,—such authority, and oft so little

affection and truth and godliness, that, before the Lord, I would rather shrink away from the wealth and splendour of them to see the light of heaven and feel its freshness, and behold the fruits of mother earth, and be trained in the knowledge of my God and of His Christ, and a patient sufferer of this transient life, under the canopy of some humble Scottish cottage, and grow to be a man worthy of the name of man, under the spiritual conditions of that blessed economy, which whoso that hath known it as I have known it, will bless its memory, and weep over its mouldering decay, and curse those abominations of Satan which are endeavouring to rear themselves in its stead.

I trust that what I have said and am about to say concerning the spiritual economy which alone formed the character of the Scottish people to that intelligence and worth which are best known and most admired by those who have observed them the most closely, will not be attributed to the motive of national vanity; for though I am preaching before the representatives and in behalf of our National Scots Charity, I feel too much honour for the land which hath afforded to so many of us so warm a welcome and comfortable home, to say anything out of a spirit of envious comparison; neither would I presume, strange as I am to the institutions of the south, and yet but imperfectly acquainted with that social and charitable economy which hath made them so great over all the earth, to undertake any comparison between the two: but I am moved by the fast-hasting progress of a system of political economy which counts men nothing and things everything, to hold up the contrary system which heretofore obtained in Scotland, counting men everything and things nothing; for I feel persuaded in my own mind, and have it much upon my heart, that this same system, which they are endeavouring to lay as the groundwork of a nation's weal, and which occupies I may say nine-tenths of the thought and public debates of this empire, hath its origin in a poor, worldly, corporeal view of man, and will bring in the train of its progress the corruption of all duties, the exaltation of all moneyed interests, the abolition of all venerable relations, and

the reducing of all things in civil policy to the calculations and chances of fortune, as the great revolutionary emperor whose sun is set reduced all things in military affairs to the calculations and chances of war, alike regardless of mercy to the conquered and inconsiderate of the lives of the conquerors. Infidelity hath shewed its character in the wars of France for the last thirty years, and I think is about to develop the same character in the policy and statesmanship of England, which seems wholly directed by the movement of the great current of wealth, as the former was directed by the movement of great masses of armed strength. Therefore I am in good earnest, and of a strong resolution to do my endeavour further to demonstrate the effects of the old system under which Scotland lay, leaving it to the spiritual and patriotic men of England to do the same by their country, before they take their fatal leap from the rock of principle and religion into the troubled waves of worldly chances.

When I look back upon all these things, and make mention of them in the hearing of my countrymen in this metropolis of Great Britain and rendezvous of nations, my heart is exceeding sad and sorrowful to behold how unmindful of the best gift of God unto their nation, and the best nurse of godly and prosperous men,—how unmindful of the Church of Scotland the sons of Scotland have been in this city, where more than anywhere else her good counsel and sure defence were needed. Because she taught you true liberality and unfeigned charity towards all who loved the Lord and called upon His name,—because she taught you to call the Church of England sister, though her proud prelates could loosen and let slip the dogs of war upon our peaceable fathers,—because she teacheth you to call the Nonconformists brethren, though now they have taken up the argument against any and every established church,—because she taught you to sit loose to little distinctions and free from formal bonds, was that a reason, is that a reason, for disavowing her, and throwing off your reverence for her at the suggestion of ambition, or the mere plea of convenience? Because a mother is good and gracious, and breedeth generous and open-hearted sons, is that a reason why she should be slighted, set at naught,

and shuffled off for any other woman who may please to adopt you? Can you so easily repudiate or neglect such a gifted, dowried Church as I have this day a little described—gifted with the wisdom of God, and endowed with the blessing of God? Can you cast off the inheritance of the faith and prayers of three centuries of such a Church, and disperse yourselves from the place of the treasure which is laid up on high, when it shall please God to arise to favour Zion? Can you so sit loose and feel indifferent to that which the twenty generations of your mothers loved, and as many generations of your fathers defended? Is that Christian,—is it manly? May we do so and remain trustworthy with God and man? I fear this is a step which betrays us to be sore, sore fallen into the arms of ambition, or vanity, or worldliness; dead to piety, duty, and gratitude; fallen from the stock of our fathers to become the grafts of an inferior stock. Again I say that I am ashamed of the indifference and supineness of Scotchmen in these and other cities to the blessings which are to be derived from adhering to the lot and distinction of the Church of Scotland, which was planted such a close vine, and which shall revive again in the days of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

This I say in general; and I know that the pious and right-hearted men with whom I am connected feel the sympathy, and share with us ministers the burden, of this doleful case of our many countrymen; who also, having the means of seconding the words and prayers of their ministers by the wisdom and charm of their acts, have begun, and are going on to give, an example of their great esteem of the Church, and their devotion unto the only Head of the Church. I have good reason to bear this testimony in the midst of my brethren; and now mark my words, and see if after many years they come not to pass: that these men, many of the youths who have so given an example to their elders, and followed the example of their fathers, will flourish in the favour and prosperity of the Lord. They will grow up no place-hunters, nor money-gatherers, but righteous and godly men, looked up to by their nation, and delighted in by their nation; they will be enriched with wisdom and filled with the grace of

God, because they have not been ashamed of His daughter; men spared to bestow wherewith she might be decently and comely adorned. They will rear children, not for mammon and for Belial, but for God and for Christ; and the blessing of God will go down unto their latest children, if they continue carefully to walk in His covenant and to observe His commandments to do them.

VII.

LAST SERMON IN THE CALEDONIAN CHURCH.*

GEN. XXVIII. 10–22.

And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran, &c.

DEARLY-BELOVED BRETHREN,—Though the worship of God be no longer confined to any set places or times, and there be given to us a noble liberty to worship Him, not in this nor in that mountain, but everywhere and anywhere, so that it be in spirit and in truth, seeing it is written, that in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him; yet are we not ashamed to confess this night that from the trials, and deliverances, and manifold blessings, spiritual and temporal, with which the Lord hath tried and proved and comforted and blessed His church and congregation in this place, there hath grown amongst us an attachment to the very walls which gave us shelter, and its roof which canopied our head, to the dead and inanimate things which have been silent witnesses of the sweet communion in which we have joined with one another, and with our God; which should we ever forget, then might the prophet also threaten against us that the stones shall cry out of the wall against us, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. When the patriarch Jacob, upon his going forth from his father's house with his staff in his hand, a solitary sojourner to a distant country, was visited, in a certain place on which he lighted and made his pillow for the night, by a vision of the Lord in a dream, he was not ashamed when he awaked in the morning to exclaim, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. How dreadful is

* Preached April 29, 1827.

this place! this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Now, surely many of us here worshipping have experienced in this place the very thing which Jacob saw in his vision. He dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. Of which symbol I judge that our Lord giveth us the interpretation in the first chapter of John's Gospel, where it is written, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." If indeed we have not seen the very thing here promised and then symbolised, but do wait for it against the day of the Lord, we have had more than a vision of it in this place, having received upon our faith of the Son of man many visits of heavenly messengers, whereby our soul hath been duly waited on and cared for; yea, having received the first-fruits of the Holy Spirit, by which we are sealed until the day of redemption. I well remember that the first sermon I preached in this place concerning the divinity of Christ, I did shew Him under the type of this ladder, by His humanity resting upon the earth, by His divinity reaching into the heavens, the great medium of communication and way of intercourse between God and our souls. Since that time, many, very many are the ministries and services of heavenly help and nourishment which we have received by this channel. And if Jacob, upon the remembrance of the emblem which he but dimly understood, was so carried into a holy zeal and rapture in the morning, we may well, upon the memory of the spiritual realities which we have experienced, and are now enriched withal, take up the same word, and in the same spirit exclaim, "This hath been to me a house of God, and a gate of heaven!"

Now, God was not offended with what the patriarch did and said; neither regarded it as superstition that the patriarch rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillow, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it, and vowed over it a solemn vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put

on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace: then shall the Lord be my God;" and having thus vowed, dedicated the stone for a temple, saying, "And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house, and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee." All this action of devout worship the Lord did not reject, because it connected itself with a particular plan, but did graciously allow and greatly honour it, in accommodation to the constitution of man's being, which cannot, neither, I take it, shall be ever able, to disengage itself from the conditions of space and time. For the next time He appeared unto the patriarch, who had now grown to be the head of families, and the owner of much substance, He spake unto him in these words, saying, "Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there, and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee, when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother." And unto Bethel he came, and was there a second time visited of the Lord, and there the second time testified his gratitude and worship by erecting a pillar of stone, and pouring a drink-offering thereon. Now this all happened under the liberty of the patriarchal dispensation, and not under the bondage of the legal dispensation,—under the promise, into the inheritance of which promise we have by faith been introduced,—and therefore we may well appropriate it both as a permission and an example for that act of acknowledgment and devotion which we this night purpose, by the grace of God, to offer up in the remembrance of all the goodness which in this place He hath made to pass before us. And in considering this holy action of the patriarch's, I perceive it to consist of three parts:—First, an acknowledgment of the presence and the grace and the goodness of God, which he had unexpectedly partaken of in that place; secondly, a commemoration thereof by an act of worship and testimony; and, thirdly, a solemn vow vowed to the Lord, or covenant entered into with Him over the same. After the like manner, seeing it did please the Lord that we should take up our rest in this place, where we have now abidden these five years, let us on this night, when we leave it, it is likely, for ever, take a review of the Lord's goodness to this congregation and church; and,

secondly, let us consider of that stone of witness, that Bethel, or house of God, which He hath enabled us to set up, though not on this spot, yet not far distant, and certainly in consequence of the Divine blessing which we partook of in this spot; and lastly, let us vow some vow, or enter into some covenant with the Lord, as a church and congregation, concerning our prosperity in the time which is to come. And may the Lord so move our hearts with devout and grateful thoughts, that they may overflow with all grace and truth of utterance, to the praise of His Holy Spirit and the honour of His dear Son; and let us, dear brethren, be of a very serious and solemn spirit, as those who look back upon the mercies of the Lord, and forward with good hope to His future blessings.

When we look back, dearly-beloved brethren, upon the mutual weakness and ignorance in which we met one another, about five years from this time, and consider the variety of trials with which the Lord hath proved us, and the condition to which we have this day been brought by His almighty grace, and how, though the archers have sorely grieved us, and shot at us, and hated us, yet our bow hath abidden in strength, and the arms of our hands have been made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob, we cannot but open our lips and utter the memory of all His goodness. For myself, I can say with the Psalmist, that I was foolish and ignorant, and as a beast before the Lord, untaught in any discipline and unenlightened in any mystery, yet conceiving that I knew all knowledge, and could make all mysteries plain, (and, indeed, I was learned in all the learning of our schools and colleges, which I have learned to be but foolishness, and I understood the popular phraseology, and had searched out the plain truth used in the churches under the name of the gospel, which now I perceive to be but as the last echo of a gospel dying out of the Church, or the far distant rumour of the gospel about to return into the Church:) and I know the same to have been the state and condition of most of you, my dear brethren and companions in the pilgrimage upon which we have thus far proceeded together: that ye also were in the same twilight knowledge with my-

self, and many in utter and entire darkness. We were as raw soldiers hastily gathered and mustered together for a campaign, unskilled in our weapons, untempered to the extremes of a warrior's life, and knowing little of the wiles and might of the enemy. I cannot look back upon that beginning without admiring the goodness and graciousness of our Captain, who hath a vigilant eye over every company of His great army, yea, and extendeth His care to every single soldier in the ranks of the Church militant, strengthening the weak, comforting the downcast, instructing the ignorant, hardening the effeminate, and preparing every man for the day of fierce and terrible battle. For when we set out together in a company under the banner of the cross, we were, I may say, fit for no post in the field, and the Lord called us to no one, but allowed us to gather knowledge and strength and resolution in peace and quietness, giving us for a season calmness and security. In those days were we wont, in the morning, to open unto you Peter's discourse to the devout Cornelius and his kind company, being thereto attracted by the similar apostolical simplicity with which we had come together, so unlike the worldly prudence and temporising expediency of these times; and in the evenings we opened the gospel of the preparation and nativity of Jesus; the Lord for more than a year being pleased to feed us with the milk of babes, and practise us in the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, which are, repentance towards God and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. God be praised that in reflecting upon this the beginning of our church, I sowed no error, nor planted any schism or heresy, though I was only conversant with the rudiments of the truth, of which, however I kept nothing back, but freely communicated that which had been given to me. In this season of initiation to the knowledge of one another and the knowledge of Christ, which was as it were the infancy and babyhood of the divine life, the Lord led us into the temptation into which children do first fall, of being spoiled by foolish fondling and giddy admiration. We were just in that state of bloom and freshness when the loveliness of the child is shooting into the fruitfulness of the

man: at which time of life Satan is wont to entwine around parents' hearts the proudest hopes, and to play around the youthful fancy with the gayest prospects. And, verily, our trial in this way was of no ordinary kind, as ye know, dear brethren, and ye likewise know how the Lord did not suffer us to be spoiled by the unstable applause of men. Nor, upon the other hand, did He permit the many storms of envy and malice and hatred which were cast at us to break our teeth or smite us to the earth. Nay, but let us give unto the Lord the glory which is His due, and look with reverence at the work which He wrought in this humble house, where He did oblige the most mighty, the most wise, and the most learned men of all this nation to sit and hear the truth. And what truth? The truth which it most concerned them to know —the vanity of all knowledge and travail of the intellect which had not Christ for its object, the glory of God for its end, and the Holy Spirit in us for its subject; the passing fleetness, unprofitableness, and degradation of all indulgences and gratifications of the sense except when under the same control; likewise the utter worthlessness before God, and wickedness in His sight, of all decencies, moralities, charities, devotions, and good works which come not of the root of faith, and grow not out of a renewed soul. On these subjects it pleased the Lord to furnish our childhood with various discourse to these multitudes of our notable men, who came hither to delight, and entertain, and perhaps to amuse themselves with the novelty of our appearance. And I believe in my heart that the Lord was well pleased with our faithfulness during that trying season, and that we have since entered into the fruits and enjoyed the profits of His goodness, because we did not refuse to declare His counsel, according to our present knowledge, to the greatest and most mighty of this land. One fruit of it we possess in that stately house into which we are about to enter; for certainly, had it not been for the excitation of spirit which was then given to us, we had never had courage to undertake what the Lord, I trust, will give us constancy to complete and surrender up to His glory. When we consider ourselves as a church and a congregation set for the testimony of the truths of the gospel

of Christ, I cannot help looking upon that notoriety which the Lord gave to our ministry at that time as intended by Him for the purpose of giving a more wide circulation to the word which He was afterwards to speak by our lips. And blessed be the Lord, that in advancing us to speak His truth before princes and nobles, and even wise and learned men, He did not suffer us to fall into the snare of vanity, or of liberality, or of flattery, or of folly in any kind. This trial being past, dear brethren, which I can never look back upon without fervent gratitude, it pleased the Lord to begin to open unto us the deeper things of His counsel, and especially the mystery of the Church concerning which we have often discoursed, and are even now discoursing. In that text, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light," we began to perceive the doctrine of election in its manifestation of the separate people; though in its mystery of the eternal purpose of God we are but now beginning to be able to discourse it thereof, and you to hear it discoursed. By means of this doctrine, the Lord wrought a twofold effect: first, causing those to fall away from us who had no desire to prove the power of divine doctrine, and wanted only the entertainment of human discourse; secondly, uniting in more close communion those who loved His truth, and opened their ear to hear it. And it is well known to those most intimately acquainted with the growth of this church, how in our meetings the glee and mirth of social friendship began to pass away for the gravity and grace of Christian brotherhood, even as the unsteady buoyancy of youth passeth into the steadfast constancy of manhood,—how a spirit of prayer and waiting for God's blessing began by degrees to come over our spirit, with the conviction that unless He should take us by the hand and help us we should utterly come to nought. True, through our boldness in declaring the mind and will of God concerning the missionary work, in denouncing the spirit of expediency which was eating the substance out of all things spiritual and temporal, those commonly reported of as the servants of the gospel became the

bitterest of our enemies, and have continued so until this day. But the Lord helped us, and continued to open more and more of His counsel, and to gather into the garner more and more of the fruits of righteousness. Especially doth this church and congregation owe her thanks for enabling us to declare and to receive the mystery of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, one God; which doctrine, next to that of the glorious advent of the Lord, was made most fruitful in winning souls unto Christ. After almost six months spent in holding up the great doctrine of the Trinity, and the necessity of idolatry in worshipping God otherwise than as Trinity in Unity, the harvest was truly great, and there were added to this church many souls which continue to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour unto this day. From the womb of this mother of doctrines came our knowledge of the Roman apostasy, which, I do well remember, we were very timorous to declare, and you were very loath to hear; but you see how the Lord hath delivered us from the snare of liberalism, and toleration of that which He hateth, and honoured this church to make perhaps the most constant and determined stand which in these latter days hath been made against the papal apostasy and its even more abandoned sister, Protestant liberality. Oh, dear brethren, if time permitted me, I could say much, and offer the incense of much praise unto the Lord who hath cleansed us from this leprosy of the Protestant Church. May the Lord make us clear-eyed watchmen to discern the distant danger, and penetrate the disguises of Satan, with which he is lying in wait to subvert us! These were great gifts of God to our souls, doctrines most true and comfortable, and full of all holiness and love, and the Lord was gracious above all measure to deem us worthy the spiritual knowledge thereof; but they were well known unto our fathers, the basis and ground-work of the Protestant churches, though now the rope of strength be untwisted almost to a very thread. But in what terms shall we speak of the great goodness of the Lord, that when He was seeking here and there a church amongst whom to plant the testimony of His second advent, which was not opened to the preachers of the Reformation, as it hath been to some

preachers of these days, He should choose us for that great honour, and open to us that doctrine in all its fulness, and along with it the prophetic character of all Scripture and of all providence. Now, brethren, I may say, for the first time, I began to perceive the true character of Divine revelation, before the opening power of which all sceptical doubts which might have lingered about the corners of the house were banished, and I trust are banished for ever. And now, from the manifestation, the Lord enabled our comprehension to ascend unto the mystery of His purpose, where only the Father is honoured, and unto the essential divinity of the Word; while by the same manifestation the humanity of the Son and the work of the Spirit were honoured. And, dear brethren, I can well testify, and do now testify, in the hearing of all you present, that no doctrine which hath been preached to this congregation hath been more profitable to bring souls unto God than this of the second advent, under the nourishment of which, while all have been fed, a very great number have been savingly convinced, and joined to the Church.

Thus, brethren, have we thought it good to shew forth the revelations which have been made known to us in this place, where we took up our rest and habitation, and from which we are now called by the providence of God to remove ourselves away. How like it hath been to that of the patriarch, consisting in pure discoursing and knowledge, and particularly in the discoursing of that glorious coming age hereafter, when we shall see the angels descending and ascending upon the Son of man! We have seen the same; the Lord hath taught it to us; and while others mock, and say, It is but a dream of the fancy, a wicked invention of darkness, He hath enabled us to say, Surely it is the truth of the Lord, the Lord's most gracious, most comfortable, most glorious manifestation of His truth to His unworthy servants! I desire to give thanks this night that you have not mocked, that you have not scoffed, that you have not derided, the great revelation of the approaching advent of the Lord. I give God thanks that it hath found a seat and a settlement in this church; and I pray you now, as many as have been enabled to receive it, to give unto God the glory, and to stand fast in the integrity of the faith, and bring

forth the abundant fruits thereof. But the Lord calleth us to depart from this place, where we have partaken such sweet rest and been enriched with such delightful visions. We must change our habitation; and what memorial shall we make, what monument shall we set up of the goodness and grace of our God?

This is the second subject to which we are called by the example of Jacob in the text, who, while yet the lively impression of the Divine goodness and condescension remained upon his spirit, with the earliest opening of his eyes to look round upon the scene of such a wonderful vision, did say, "Surely God is in this place, and I knew it not: this is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven;" devoutly acknowledging the holy presence with which he had been enshrined during the dark watches of the night. And so, many of us also, far removed from our fathers' house, being brought to this city with staff and scrip to pursue our lonely way towards honour and preferment, have in this very place found God to be present unto their souls, even the God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and can say, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." I knew it not. I came seeking my own entertainment, haply my own pleasure, the good opinion of men; or I did but set me down to pass the Sabbath, which decency requireth to be somewhere passed in a religious house; and lo! I have found God, whom I sought not for; God hath found me, He hath visited me, He hath made revelations of His blessed truth unto me, He hath taken me into the inheritance of the promise made unto my fathers, He hath confirmed the covenant with my own soul which He made with my father. This hath surely been the house of God to me, it hath proved the very gate of heaven. I think there be a goodly number within my own knowledge who can appropriate the language of the patriarch unto themselves. Nor doth it make the work less honourable, that it hath been done in this humble and unadorned house, and not under the starry vault of heaven; though to the eye of taste, the wayfaring and lonely patriarch, sleeping with the earth for his bed, and the stones of the earth for his pillow, and the vault of heaven for his canopy, may seem much in keeping

with such a splendid vision of the opened way from heaven to earth, and the angelic travellers thereon; and we here, the artisans and craftsmen, and tradesmen and merchants of a laborious city, crowded and pent together in the nooks and corners of an obscure house in an unfrequented and unfashionable quarter of the city, may seem to the eye of taste very much out of keeping with any such revelation as we have laid claim to; yet to the spiritual eye it is one and the same manifestation of divine truth, whether made in the solitudes of Bethel, or on the way to Haran, or in the alleys of the city of London, upon the fathers of the twelve patriarchs of Israel, or one of the obscurest craftsmen of this city; nay, the least who are called by the preaching of the kingdom of heaven is greater than the greatest of all the prophets. In the former case it is emblematical, in the other spiritual, but in both waiting for that outward reality of most worthy and fit imagery, which it yet shall have when the Lord shall come again with ten thousand of His saints, and the way of communication between heaven and earth shall be revealed, and the thronging passengers on the way of the Son of man made manifest, whom now we behold not, though we know they are ever passing and repassing on their various ministries to the saints.

The patriarch having thus expressed the burden of his soul in so strong and earnest language, did straightway proceed to set up a monument of his thankfulness unto the Lord; and being possessed of nothing but his staff, ("With this staff went I over Jordan,") he took the stones on which his head had rested when he beheld that glorious vision and received that gracious promise, purposing if he prospered to make it God's house, and to devote to the Lord's service a tenth part of all his increase, saying, "And this stone which I have set up for a pillar shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give a tenth unto thee." In what way the patriarch would fulfil this vow, and dispose of that tenth which he dedicated to the Lord, it is not to our present purpose to inquire, seeing we are not using it as a pattern to copy from in the letter, but only in the spirit. The patriarch had a sense of God's grace, and his soul longed for some method of

expressing it, and he vowed and pledged himself to the Lord to do it out of the first of his substance, if the Lord should preserve and prosper him, and restore him to his father's house in peace. In like manner the Lord, so soon as He had delivered the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, gave them an opportunity of contributing to the tabernacle of their substance. And when He had enriched David and Solomon, He accepted the magnificent temple at their hands. He even straitened and cut the people short when they lingered about the works of the second temple, as you may read in the prophecies of Haggai. And under the dispensation of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, the spirit of devoting of their substance to His service, so far from relaxing, was increased to the utmost possible bound. And wherever Christianity hath made progress, the same effects have been uniformly produced; taking advantage of which, as well as the other natural tendencies of true religion, the Papacy built up its superstitious devices and offerings at shrines, and sin-indulgences, and death-penances, and purgatorial-redemptions, unto this day. From which I would stand the farthest possible apart, when I argue, nevertheless, that it is both wise and gracious in God to permit and accept such offerings of the pious soul as this which Jacob freely pledged, though it is one of Satan's chief and earnest arts to convert them into costly passports to heaven, against which the ministers of religion should stand always upon the alert. For how otherwise should we be able to shew our sense of God's good providence towards us, than by devoting some part of it to His special service, whatever that may consist in, whether in supporting the ministry of the Church, or in caring for the poor of His flock, or helping the calamities of the suffering world, or in some other way appointed in His Word? To debar this avenue of the renewed soul would be to deprive it of one of its most agreeable and profitable exercises, and to exclude devotion from one of the quarters of our worldly condition. And so little is this to be imagined as about to cease in the millennial times, that it is continually given as a feature of them, that the princes of the earth shall offer gifts unto Christ, that kings and queens shall bring the riches of the earth into the city of His habitation,

and that kings' daughters with their treasures shall do attendance upon His bridal Church.

Forasmuch, then, as the godly Jacob, and the Israelites under Moses, and under David, and under Ezra, and the wise men of the East in the stable of Bethlehem, and the wealthy saints who were converted after Pentecost, and the Christian Church in all ages, have constantly been glad of every occasion to testify their sense of God's goodness by the devotion of a part of their substance, which in the millennial age is to be still more eagerly pursued; it doth seem to me a most meet and righteous thing for any church or congregation, which hath been favoured as we have been with revelations of Divine truth, with the pure administration of ordinances and sacraments, with the communion of saints, and all the other unspeakable benefits of a Christian Church, to express and embody our sense of the same in the erection of a house, and that no mean one, to the preaching of the same pure doctrine, and the administration of the same wholesome discipline which we have found so profitable to our souls. I speak not of the blessing thereby certain to ourselves, and to our children, and to our children's children, if they will avail themselves of them; I speak not of the blessings to the scattered wilderness-population of this city; I speak not of the comfort to the Church of Christ in general, to behold their brethren affected with zeal to the gospel of Christ, nor of the profit to the whole land from having another house of praise and prayer and sound doctrine erected within its borders;—all these things I mention not, as being of inferior consideration, and coming in the train of that high act of making a solemn devotion of substance unto God because of the blessings, spiritual and temporal, which He hath bestowed upon us as a church. It is to Him I would have that house to be devoted, and offered with as much purity as Abraham did offer the tenth part of the spoils to Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God. I would have you to look upon it when we shall enter it together, with the same solemnity with which Jacob looked upon the stony pillar of Luz; and I would have you to pour over it the solemn unction of your votal prayer, with what reverence and sanctity he poured upon that pillar the oil of dedication

And, my brethren, I shall count our offering incomplete while any man can lay his finger upon a stone or upon a splinter of it, and say, It is mine; or while any man beneath the dignity of the chief magistrate of the state can come and say, The door of it must be shut. Let us offer it, dear brethren, a whole offering, without let or hindrance, unto the Lord for His holy worship, according to the soundest and strictest method of our fathers; and rest you assured, dear brethren, that being so offered the Lord will accept it in good part, and honour it as His own, and as His own receive it, so long as He shall see the land worthy of the preaching of the gospel, and the Church of Scotland worthy to be the depositary of sound doctrine. And if we would wish the last ray of the departing light to linger lovingly about the memorials of that house which we devote, then, my beloved, let us devote it most willingly, most freely, most fully unto the Lord. That is the best charter, that is the best deed of settlement,—believe me, that is the best trust.

Those stones which had been the pillow of his head did but mark upon the lonely wild unto the pious Jacob that spot where the Lord had shewn unto him the emblem of his future glory, and promised unto him the inheritance of the land of promise. It marked the solemn spot, that, should it please God to direct again his footsteps thither, he might make it for himself into a house of God, and dedicate upon the altar there the tenth part of all his increase. And for long and long did the Lord honour this same Bethel to be a chief abode of His holiness, even until the time of the rebellion of the ten tribes of Israel, when, in the days of Rehoboam the son of Solomon, Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which caused Israel to sin, set up there a calf after the abomination of Egypt. Whereby it is signified unto us that no piety or zeal of those who found a house can protect or preserve it from the invasion of the enemy, who continually perverteth the ways of God; yet, as the Lord hath promised that His righteousness shall be unto children's children, to such as keep His covenant, and remember His commandments to do them,—which also He shewed unto Jacob, by planting His true worship in this same Bethel for almost a thousand years,—O brethren,

let us seek, by some very powerful and pure act of devotion unto God, to conciliate His favour unto this place which we have now erected to be a monument of our piety unto the generations which are to come after. Who knows but the Lord may look down, and behold and accept the homage of His servants, and be pleased to receive from our hands that which we offer unto Him, and to call it His own, and say, Here will I plant the honour and glory of my name; and here shall many sons and many daughters be born into my Church? For it is most certain that under the gospel, as under the law, and under the promise, and in all His dispensations, the Lord blesseth the children for the fathers' sake, and is very loath to remove His presence away from any place or church upon which He hath already bestowed it, as lately we did read together in His expostulation with the churches of Sardis and Thyatira, whom He entreateth with all His might, and to whom He sendeth special epistles of exhortation. Now surely, brethren, the Lord hath not manifested Himself to any church with more love than to us in these latter days, whom, from ignorance and blindness and darkness, He hath brought to the manifestation and belief of His truth; whom, from wandering and straying after our own imaginations, He hath brought to a united heart to love, serve, and obey Him; of whom, though we were not a people, He hath made to be a people of God, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, to shew forth the glory of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. Wherefore we may assuredly believe He meaneth us well, and will perfect us, and that which concerneth us, if we abide in holiness and in love, patient and faithful unto the end. Therefore, my dearly beloved, let us gird up the loins of our mind, and be of good courage, while we stand before the Lord, and in His presence enter into a solemn act of devotion, saying with the patriarch Jacob, "If God will be with us, and will keep us in this way that we go; and will give us bread to eat and raiment to put on; if He will bring us through this wilderness unto our Father's house, then shall the Lord be our God; and this house which we have set up for a stone of help shall be God's house unto us, and we shall out of our substance provide plentifully for His worship there-

in." In a word, we will do it willingly, and we will do it cheerfully,—out of our substance we will bring Him gifts, and lay them plentifully before Him; esteeming it an honour to have our offering accepted of His hand. Dear brethren, unto whom should the Lord intrust His substance in keeping but unto them who are faithful to the trust? If we are not faithful over the least, we shall not be intrusted with the greatest; if we have not been faithful over the unrighteous mammon, who will commit unto us the true riches? Therefore, dear brethren, resolve every one to devote your all unto God, soul and body and estate, and go about daily to do it; withdrawing from the service of vanity, and of pride, and of avarice, and of ambition, and of all unrighteousness, and devoting yourselves to the service of honesty, of charity, of religion, and of all righteousness; and behold what gainers ye will be, how the Lord will send His blessing, fill your barns, increase your stores, and make your presses to burst out with new wine! God knows, my dear brethren, that I am advocating no base grovelling interest, no low earthly ambition, but endeavouring to rouse your spirit up to the pitch of the aged and pious patriarch, that you may go forth this night out of this place, in the same devoted spirit in which he went with his pilgrim's staff from Bethel towards the fords of Jordan. You know well I want no gift—you know well I never sought any—nor now do seek or desire anything for me and mine beyond the poorest of the people; you know I cared not for the stateliness or size or splendour of the house in which I ministered, having oft told you that I am content, when the Lord willeth, to take my fare with my fathers, who dined in caves of the rock, and preached under the noble canopy of heaven. And I will be your apologist also, and say, that besides the honour of God's worship, and the common weal of our people, nothing moved or stirred your minds to the great work which you have undertaken.

And therefore with the more confidence do I call upon you now to walk in the same footsteps, and now, by a solemn act, to devote unto the Lord, without grudging, all that you have done, and all that you may yet be required to do, to complete the work. Say unto Him, "What we have given to Thee hath been but a pittance of all which Thou hast given

unto us; we have not known ourselves poorer for it, but rather richer until this day. What we have given to Thee out of our time hath been sweetly spent; the sweetest of our hours have been in the service of Thy Church; and Thou didst make Thy Spirit to prevail in the midst of us over all our wicked dispositions and indispositions. And Thy Sabbath hath been very sweet unto us; we have enjoyed much of Thy goodness, whereat our heart this day is glad. Blessed be Thou who hast called upon us to lengthen our cords and strengthen our stakes. Blessed be Thou who hast given us a place to rest in for a possession to Thy congregation for ever. Go Thou up with us with that fulness of joy with which Thou wentest up with thine ark to Jerusalem; and fill the house with the glory of Thy presence, as Thou didst the temple which was dedicated unto Thee by Solomon the king of Israel." My dear brethren, be of good courage; be of a stout and courageous heart. The enemies who have sought our subversion have themselves been subverted; and if we walk in Zion's courts, no weapon formed against us shall ever prosper. Many of you can join me and say, We came up hither with our staff, as Jacob went up to Padan-aram; the Lord hath increased us; He hath given us wives and children, and ceiled houses to dwell in; He hath given us bread to eat and raiment to put on; He hath indeed led us in a good and quiet way, delivering us from the hands of many enemies. Therefore He shall be our God for ever, and we will be to Him for a people. Oh that the Lord would accept us! Oh that the Lord would accept of our children! Oh that the Lord would accept also of our substance which we have embodied in this house which we have offered unto Him! And blessed be all those who have helped us in this work out of their substance, though they partake not with us of the same spiritual pastures. We bless the Lord for their countenance, and we will continue to pray for them as in times past we have done. And we will honour the king, whose brothers and sisters have worshipped along with us; and we will give due respect to dignities, of whom every order has worshipped amongst us; and we will know no party in the state, but be good and loyal subjects, seeing the

heads of every party have worshipped with us in peace. And while we adhere to the ordinances and observances of our mother Church, we will stretch out the hand of true brotherhood to all who honour Christ Jesus, our honoured Head. We will know no distinction of nation, while we seek with peculiar earnestness the outcast and strayed children of our Church, for whom we are ordained watchmen in this great city. So, dear brethren, we resolve in the strength of the Lord, and so may the Lord enable us to fulfil.

While I thus stir up your spirit and my own with words of strength and encouragement, let us guard against rashness and over-boldness. Satan lieth ever in wait, seeking to entrap us, and pride and confidence are the pinnacle of the temple from which he would fain cast us down to destroy us. Therefore, very dear brethren, let us continue of the same humble moods, and walk in all our ways with the same soft step which the Lord hath prospered hitherto; hasting nothing, precipitating nothing, but gathering in the harvest of prosperity as the Lord may be pleased to ripen it, and bestowing upon Him the first-fruits of it all. I do pray you, especially, not to be uplifted by the wonderful grace of the Lord in bringing, by such a wonderful and unexpected providence, perhaps the two most honoured ministers of our Church to preach the gospel unto us upon this occasion. Oh, be guarded against trusting in the arm of flesh!—of honouring man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for what is he to be accounted of? But be prepared with all meekness to hear the word from their lips which the Lord may be pleased to send; for be assured He will not bring two such from so far a distance without some purpose of His grace to be served thereby. They have some message, rest assured, from the Lord. Be ye prepared to receive it. But, oh, give God praise that the five years' labour which we have laboured together under this roof, with little help and with much opposition of man, hath the promise of being at the last so honoured beyond example; and the foolish jestings and ignorant speculations of those who rail at us and our doctrines will be put to shame by the countenance and approval of men who have been tried and found faithful. Regard it as a token for good to us and also to our countrymen;

and let us hope that the Lord will yet make the Scottish Church to be honoured in this metropolis of Britain, as a faithful witness in these last days, and that by her means He will gather a people to the glory of His name.

O brethren! I know not how to conclude. My heart faints at the thought of saying the Amen to the ministry which I have ministered from this pulpit. To me it hath been a very profitable ministry, and I know it hath been so likewise to very many of you; I would hope to all. The Lord hath acknowledged me as a minister of His gospel by tokens of which the number is known only to myself. Worthless, worthless man that I am to be so acknowledged of my Master. O ye ministers of truth! be of courage, for the most unworthy of you all has been accepted in His service. Ye members of Christ, honour your ministers, for Christ hath honoured in this place, to this flock, one who was totally unworthy, and is totally unworthy, to keep a flock. And ye who know any portion of the truth, present it boldly, and the Lord will increase you mightily; for to one who knew but a small, small portion of it, He hath taught much, blessed be His holy name! And you, my own people, and the sheep of my pasture, be instant in prayer; be desirous of the best food, and covet the best gifts and largest graces, and haply for your sakes the Lord will honour me with more discoveries of the Spirit. And ye who are my children in the gospel, remember that the Lord spake the word which hath saved you by these lips of mine, and honour me by the constant mention of me in your prayers. O dear brethren! regard not these things as words of course. I value the prayer of a brother too highly to mete it unto a ceremonious, courteous request. I ask it as one that loveth and honoureth the prayer of the righteous in the last degree. I beseech it as one who is burdened daily with the growing weight and increasing cares of the churches. Therefore, believe me, I am in the deepest earnest in this, as well as in all that I have this night uttered.

And now, O Lord God! who hath watched for Thy poor congregation in this place, continue to watch for us whither we go, and to keep us under our great Shepherd. Increase

our numbers, increase our health and strength, increase our substance, increase our honour in the Church. Make us able and valiant to maintain Thy truth unto the death, and cheerfully to offer ourselves upon the service of the faith. Remember this place for God, when we are gone forth from it, and let the blessing of those who went before rest upon them who are to come after. And, oh, prepare our way before us! Go up with us together into Thy house, and let our feet stand together in the courts of Thy house, and bring us to the place where Thy tabernacles are found; and hide us in Thy pavilion until the evil days be overpast; and gather us with the Church of the first-born in heaven. Oh, hear this prayer, and answer it in fulness, our God and King, in whom is our trust and our confidence, and by whom our footsteps have hitherto been led! Amen and amen.

VIII.

FIRST SERMON IN THE NATIONAL SCOTCH CHURCH.*

PSALM CXXVI. 3.

The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.

MY DEARLY-BELOVED BRETHREN,—Though I have the greatest desire to resume the discourse of the glory which the Son of man bringeth unto His Father by the Church, and to open the whole mystery of the Church, and of her oppressions under the world, yet do I feel constrained by the strongest sense of obligation to devote this whole day to another service, which you will agree with me in thinking is most due unto the Lord our God, who with so much goodness and bounty, and, I may say, with so much honour, hath planted our feet in this tabernacle of peace, welcomed us hither with so much of His good countenance, holpen us with the services of His most honourable ministers, and strengthened us with the offerings and congratulations of all men. The events and experiences of the last two weeks,—the spirit of love and harmony which hath abidden over our unworthy heads,—the rich and varied feast of instruction which the Lord hath served forth to strengthen and refresh us in the way of His commandments, are not to pass unacknowledged unto the great Giver of all good: nor are the ends of His own glory and of His Church's good, for which He hath so graciously entreated and so bountifully loaded the least worthy of all His congregations, to lie hidden from our research or removed from our request; nor are our hearts to be withholden from breaking forth into laughter and singing upon the memory of His goodness; nor are our minds to be re-

* Preached May 28, 1827.

strained this day from meditating by what means we shall best advance the cause of the gospel of Christ, and shew forth the sense which we entertain of His grace and mercy to us, the most unworthy of all His creatures. Wherefore, perceiving that it is not possible to gather the church and congregation together upon a week-day, which our Church rather affecteth for such services, I do propose, upon this the first Sabbath of my ministry in this house, to offer up unto the Lord an offering of thanksgiving for myself and for all the people, and at the same time to search and inquire diligently how we may walk together in His presence with all comeliness and grace, as those who have been so highly favoured and signally honoured of the Lord.

To which end I have made choice, as you perceive, for the subject of discourse, of a psalm composed, no doubt, by some one of the children of the captivity in Babylon, when Cyrus issued his proclamation giving them leave to return to their own land, and rebuild their city and their temple. For seventy years had they sat down by the rivers of Babylon and wept, hanging their unstrung and idle harps upon the willows of the stream, rather than use them in the service of their cruel oppressors. For the true-hearted captives said, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." And after having thus with breakings of heart long sowed in tears the seed of faith and hope, they were permitted to reap in joy the harvest of enjoyment with laughter and singing, when the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion. And they said, "We were like them that dream; then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing." For now, so remarkable was the dealing of the Lord by His captives, and so remarkable the stretching out of His arm for their sake, that even the people among the heathen were constrained to observe it and to exclaim, "The Lord hath done great things for them." To which the daughter of Zion, taking her harp from off the willows where it had so long hung, responded thus thankfully and wisely,—"The Lord hath done

great things for us, whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Such, dear brethren, was the occasion, and such is the sentiment of the psalm from which we have this day chosen to discourse unto you some word of a similar strain, according to the experiences of the Lord's goodness which we also have partaken, after our souls had wellnigh fainted and our faith almost misgave under the delay of our desire and expectation. And to the end of bringing out the whole work of this day in proper order—

First, Let us consider the great things which the Lord hath done for us, and endeavour to rejoice and shew forth our gladness upon all the memory thereof; and—

Secondly, The ends for which He hath done such great things for us; and what He expecteth from us towards the complete and perfect attainment of those ends, for the sake of which He hath so blessed us.

Such is the method according to which we propose this day to lead forth your meditations and thanksgivings and holy purposes before the Lord your God. And may the Holy Spirit help our infirmities, and enable us to offer together such an offering as will be well-pleasing in His sight!

I am, then, in the first place to endeavour to make a true estimate in the hearing of you all of the great things that God hath done for us; which you will take as a supplement to that historical rehearsal which we made on the evening when we separated from the former dwelling-place of our praise and testimony. Now, in attempting such a statement of the Lord's goodness and grace, it will be necessary, first, to present those things in which all of us have an equal and common interest, and afterwards those things which concern us more particularly as the children of the Scottish Church, who are specially beholden unto God, and have this day, as it were, a double debt of gratitude to pay. The things which we have to acknowledge in common are, first, the great goodness of God in providing for us this day the goodly prospect of sitting together in peace under the glad sound of the

gospel, which the Psalmist prized so highly in these words:— "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For thou art the glory of their strength, and in thy favour shall our horn be exalted." Nor doth Paul set this means of grace at a lower mark when with a climax he ascendeth unto the preaching of the word as the great ordinance of God for awakening the souls of men, and stirring them up to call upon His name unto salvation: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" And if you will consult your own experience, or more largely inquire into the history of the Church of Christ, you will find that to the preaching of the gospel by the mouth of faithful ministers, the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints is chiefly due. For, dear brethren, you are not ignorant, though many be ignorant, that the written word, by making a continual appeal to the natural understanding and the natural feelings, hath a tendency to beget a natural religion of the mind and of the heart, consisting in intellectual and intelligible dogmas, whether orthodox or heterodox, (for inasmuch as they are merely intellectual, it maketh little difference of what creed they are, being at the best lifeless opinions,) and consisting in moral duties, cases of conscience, and outward formal observances, which the apostle calleth dead works. This natural religion, I say, to which the simple and unaided reading of the word ever tendeth, and must tend, it doth continually require the office of the preacher to correct; who, standing equally between the written word and the Holy Spirit, being of neither but of both, may embody in his discourse all the truth of the one, and exemplify in his discourse all dependence upon the power of the other. And herein consisteth the beauty and the blessedness of the visible Church, that it doth for the Holy Spirit the same good service which the written word doth for the Son, the former being the Spirit's especial abode, as the latter is Messiah's especial abode, and

both together most profitable and most necessary to manifest and to establish the election of the Father. Now, of the visible Church, which is the pillar and the ground of the truth, by far the most powerful and precious ordinance of the Holy Spirit, which He inhabiteth as between the cherubim, is the ministry, the true and faithful ministry of the word of God, wherein as from the oracle He giveth forth the truth in the hearing of the Church. This royal ordinance Satan casteth down in the apostate papacy, or keepeth far in the background, occupying the ears of the people with his mystery of iniquity, and their eye with his mummery of superstition; the same artifice he carried into effect here in England during the evil days of Laud; and though he could not entirely succeed, he hedged it in to a mere pinfold of space and time, by casting three services into one long service before the sermon should commence, which he so straitened as to leave it almost helpless in the struggle against the wearied and worn-out attention of the people. And in Scotland he hunted preaching out of house and hall, of church and habitable places, with the utmost ferocity, well knowing that it is his most terrible enemy, which while it lived and lasted would keep the Church against his seductions. And observe, brethren, that even in our small experience, the only thing against which he hath raged is the liberty which I take to myself in preaching beyond my fellows, at which he is exceeding wroth, and would, if he could, overthrow it. Now, there is no way by which you shall better estimate the value of any gift of the Church than by the temper and tooth which Satan sheweth against it. And well I do know that in this our Protestant Church, the cruelties which, under various pretences, he hath wreaked upon the faithful preaching of the gospel do exceed a hundred, yea, a thousand fold all the rest; and well, therefore, am I justified this day in putting it first in the file of our debts unto our most gracious God, that we are now gathered together for the first time under a roof, which is by express charter and deed of settlement devoted to the preaching of that sound doctrine upon which the churches of the Reformation are founded.

Turn your eyes and look around you and consider well at

this time of day the condition of Christendom. Behold the larger portion of it under the apostasy of the Man of Sin; behold another portion of it under the Greek Church, which I cannot but conceive as worse still, by how much it addeth to almost the corruption of the former a rooted heresy upon the procession of the Holy Ghost; then consider, what I conceive to be worst of all, the infidel condition of the Reformed Churches, though they possess both the Scriptures and the orthodox creed; consider also how these two Reformed Churches of Britain, which so mightily flourished under the preaching of the word, have declined under the decay and disrepute of that royal ordinance; and, finally, look at the various classes of Dissenters, and observe how exactly they take their tone and temper from the character of the doctrine which is preached to them from Sabbath to Sabbath. Do this, I entreat you, and be at pains to give God the praise and the glory, if you think that you have now His oracles fully and clearly preached unto you; or, if you think otherwise, earnestly and constantly pray that He would trim your lamp, and set it on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house. And oh! give heed unto the word preached to you, which, if it be the word of God, must either prove the savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. It cannot return unto him void. It must either kill or it must make alive. Beware lest it should be the sentence of condemnation unto any one, instead of being the word of salvation unto all. Furthermore, look around you in this city, and behold from how many pulpits this doctrine of justification by works is preached to many deluded congregations. From how many more the doctrine of our Lord's divine name, whereby alone we can be saved, is denied; and from how many the peculiarities of a sect, and the prejudices of a party, are magnified into the importance of faith, and holiness, and hope, and charity, and peace. Behold how Satan, through this ordinance of preaching, soweth tares in the field of the world, and distributeth poison amongst the children of the kingdom! and if you feel that the Lord hath defended you from his subtle artifices, and given you not a false but a true doctrine, not a partial but a full gospel, give Him thanksgiving and praise, such as the husbandman

doth offer when the dews of spring and the gentle rains of summer begin to fall upon the sown fields, making the tender blade to spring, and shoot into the ear, and ripen into the fruitfulness of harvest. And oh! dear brethren, as the earth, receiving the former and the latter rains, doth teem forth from her fruitful bosom all flowers and plants, and juicy fruits for man and beast, so do your souls, whereon the dews of God's word plentifully fall, yield forth the fruits of all righteousness, and the odour of sweet and grateful incense, which is the prayers of saints. Think what price your fathers set upon the preaching of the word, who preferred to be wet with the dews of heaven, and beat upon by every storm of the wild mountain, rather than be deprived of the hearing of the word, rather than listen to an adulterated gospel, or be defrauded of the pure ordinances of Christ. The thirsty caravan which hath passed a day and a night without a drop of water, doth not rush forward with more eagerness to the waters, or plunge themselves with more delight in the rushing stream, and bless the Lord who hath relieved their anguish, and delivered them from the pangs of death, than did our fathers hasten to the sound of the voice of the faithful preacher whenever it was uplifted, and sat under it with delight, and could not weary themselves with its enjoyment but loved it to the death, and willingly gave up the ghost in testifying to the blessedness of the people who hear the joyful sound, and the misery of the people who hear it not.

The second ground of thanksgiving which I feel called upon this day to set before you is consequent upon the former, and though of a less general application, is of a higher kind —viz., that by the preaching of the word it hath pleased the Lord to call out a church from amongst us, and order it according to the true and primitive discipline of the apostles and the fathers. It were to me a small matter of joy this day to enter into the possession of this pulpit and of this goodly house, with all the powers and rights of a minister of the venerable Church of Scotland, did I not at the same time feel that I was the minister of a church composed of lively stones, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head of the corner. And this, I well know and believe, is the rejoicing of all who hear me, that we

have amongst us a church of those hidden ones whose names are written in heaven, of that election for whose sake the rest are beloved, of that number whereof two or three do bring along with them the presence of the great Master of assemblies, of those righteous men whereof five will preserve the most wicked city. How honoured is this house to hold within its walls the persons of any of the adopted sons of God, who are chosen for kings and priests, and ordained to reign with Christ upon the earth. If the person of our king, or of the son of our king, were hailed and welcomed here, how much more the persons of those who are the sons of the King of kings, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom without end. To think, to believe, to have the best grounds for being assured, that many of these heirs of glory are now present with us, are of us, are continually praying and praising the Lord along with us, is indeed cause of unspeakable thanksgiving, and ought with all thankfulness to be remembered in the presence of our God. And we do now render unto the Lord all blessing and praise that He hath not hidden Himself from our mixed congregation, nor disowned our feeble ministry, but gathered together those who were scattered and called those who were not called, and made us who were not a people to be the people of God, a holy nation, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, to shew forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. Oh, ye servants of the Lord, who have the witness of the Spirit within you that ye are the children of God, abound in all thanksgiving and praise unto the Father, who hath chosen you in Christ Jesus from the foundation of the world, and sanctified you with the Spirit of holiness for a witness and a testimony to the mighty power which hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light. Remember wherefore ye have been called, not from anything in you but for the glory of God and for the praise of Christ; and remember whereto ye are called,—to watch and to pray for the Church of Christ, to offer the sacrifices of righteousness for the sake of your brethren,—not to refrain your lips in the congregation, but to speak of mercy and of judgment, and to sing for ever of faithfulness and truth, to record the memory of the good-

ness of the Lord, and to tell of all His great and wonderful acts, and to magnify Him who is glorious in His holiness, fearful in His praises, doing wonders. It is yours to abide in this city where ye were called, it is yours to honour these ordinances by which ye were called, and to love unto the death those brethren in the midst of whom ye were called, unto life everlasting. And be ye assured that your effectual fervent prayers, your wrestlings with God, your pains and sufferings, will much avail for the sake of those of us who have not yet tasted that the Lord is gracious. Ye are for us as Joshua and Caleb, to refresh with and hold up before us goodly tokens of the fruitfulness of the land into which the Lord would lead and guide us all. We give thanks for your sake that we have such true men amongst us. And oh! do ye pray the Lord for our sakes that we also may be accepted in that day. Dearly-beloved brethren, I count it no mean matter of thanksgiving to the Lord that He hath given such manifest tokens of His favour to our doctrine and discipline and worship, as by means thereof to call so many sons and daughters unto Himself, who walk together in the simplicity of the faith unto this day. And I do entreat you to cherish and honour that brotherhood amongst us who have set to their seals that God is true; wherever you behold any one more holy than yourselves, I pray you to give unto God the praise, and to yield reverence to the vessel which He hath chosen; and so it will come to pass that the Lord will acknowledge your kindness and respect unto His little children, and compass us with His favour as with a shield. And while we thus with all submission acknowledge the sovereignty of God to choose whom it pleaseth Him to choose into the Church of the Beloved, we bless and praise His gracious name not the less for the ordinances of the visible Church by which the election are called out from the world; we bless His name for the possession of that sound faith for which our fathers contended against Arminian errors; we bless His name for that primitive discipline for which our fathers laid down their lives rather than resign it to the will even of kings; we bless His name for these simple forms of worship, praying fervently that we might be able to fill them with the Holy Spirit through the mighty

working of God within our souls; we bless His name for the uncorrupted sacraments of the gospel, through which His Church may be enlarged and edified amongst us. Dearly-beloved brethren, what a treasure we this day possess, what unsearchable riches of the goodness and love of God—the knowledge of God and Christ Jesus whom He hath sent, as it is contained in the Holy Scriptures; the complete temple of the Church wherein the Holy Spirit abideth! The former the word of the knowledge of eternal life, the latter the constitution of love and liberty, and all spiritual blessings, through which the saints of God are reared up for heaven. How precious do we hold our civil rights and immunities! how valuable in our sight, and in the sight of the world, is the constitution of our state, whereby these rights are all chartered and secured unto us! But oh, what are these compared with the statutes of the gospel of peace, and the ordinances of the Church of Christ, within which the soul walketh as in a sanctuary, pure and blessed, and is preserved as in a fortress from the fiery darts of the adversary; where she is hid as in a pavilion from the evil days, and covered with the skirt of her Saviour's love! "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy, and gathered them out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. Remember us, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: oh, visit us with thy salvation, that we may see the good of thy chosen, that we may rejoice in the gladness of this nation, that we may glory with thine inheritance."

The third and last ground of thanksgiving which we ought this day to remember before the Lord is, that these blessings of a preached gospel and a true Church He hath, so far as can be done, secured to us and to our children in perpetuity. We were like wanderers without a home until this day, when the Lord hath given us a secure abiding-place. We were tenants at the will of others until this day, when the Lord hath presented us with a house of our own wherein to dwell; whose security, brethren, though we place not in deeds, charters, or endowments, but in God's good and gracious providence ex-

tended over a faithful and holy people, yet do we not the less desire to bless and praise Him, that the ordinary means whereby a people are preserved together from the changes and fluctuations and accidents of this passing scene, He hath bestowed upon this house, under whose stately roof we now worship with one accord. The ground on which it stands is sacred unto God—the property of no man, but the commonty of the Church. The four walls which enclose it, with all its appropriate and beautiful furniture, no man hath power over; and its trust-deed is sacred as the archives of the kingdom. This pulpit can be occupied only by a preacher of pure and undefiled doctrine according to the severest form of the Church; and while the words only of eternal life are preached under the canopy of this roof unto the living, there will slumber beneath the feet of the worshippers the hallowed dust of their fathers and their mothers, and their brothers and their sisters, until the morning of the resurrection, when they that sleep in Jesus shall, at His voice, awake from the slumbers of the tomb. Therefore, dear brethren, make this place the home of your souls, and say, "Here will I remain while I live, and here also shall my flesh rest in hope." Bind yourselves to this house with a strong and holy bond; be not ready for convenience to forsake it; be not disposed on slight grounds to abandon it; join your hearts to it, and let your souls delight to abide in it; be it the place of your meeting with the Church of Christ, and with Christ the Head of the Church; the sacred place of the covenant of God's faithfulness; the holy place of the presence of the Most High; where your souls found comfort, and abode in peace. Thus abide and tabernacle here; and when it shall please the Lord to remove you to a distance from our fellowship, you will look back to the place with sweet remembrance, and from far-distant lands your spirit will assemble along with us on the Sabbath morn; and you will say, "For I went up with the congregation into the house of God, and we kept our holy days with mirth and gladness." O brethren, it is not that I would bring back any part of the bondage of the Old Testament, much less is it that I would wreathe around your necks any of the superstitions of the Papacy, or consecrate with any episcopal form

these material walls, and this local residence—which things I dare not do as a minister of the New Testament, and a presbyter of the Church of Scotland; but I may do that which I earnestly desire to do—affiance your affections to God's holy worship which here proceedeth, wed your hearts to God's holy word which is here preached, gather your souls to the communion of saints which is to be here holden, and do my endeavour to fix around this habitation of the praise of God all the holiest and most steadfast affections of your souls; that ye may come up hither in no every-day mood—that ye may assemble with no irreverent heedlessness, but with gravest thoughts and deepest exercises of hope and desire and love—that ye may sit with grave composure of soul, and with undivided heart may worship, with undistracted mind listen to the worship of God. And why do I so labour this day to stir up our souls with high and solemn thoughts concerning this place? Because I well know that its prosperity, as a church of Christ and house of the Most High God, doth wholly depend upon the worthiness of that service which is herein offered unto His holiness. I know that nothing will preserve the light of His countenance upon this place but the prayers and praises of His people ascending from this place. Because I would add to all the provisions of human wisdom and foresight, that which can alone make them effectual,—the blessing of our God, who slumbereth not nor sleepeth, and the watchful care of Him who hath the angels of the churches in His right hand, and walketh among the candlesticks thereof,—I would not have a day to pass over your heads without calling to your remembrance, and, if possible, fixing it in your hearts, that the prosperity of the gospel in this house, for many generations, resteth chiefly upon us. Whether it shall remain a habitation of the oracle of truth, or be converted into a den of the spirit of error; whether it shall abide for a shelter and covert to the Church of Christ, or be converted into a rendezvous for the synagogue of Satan; whether it shall be honoured to be a bulwark of the Holy Catholic Church, or be mastered by the seductions of heresy and schism, and turned to the service of some one or other of the apostasies from the faith;—these things, dear brethren,

these high and holy issues, depend upon us, the founders of this church; upon my faithful and full ministry; upon the elders' exercise of righteous and loving discipline; upon the deacons' care of the liberality of the rich for the necessities of the poor; upon the brotherly love and sweet communion of the brethren one with another; upon the fervent and continual prayers of all the congregation directed towards this one great end—that the Lord would not suffer His light to go down over this house for many generations—that it might be found a house well ordered and prepared at the coming of the Lord—that it might be preserved in the tossings and heavings of the womb of time, against the ruthless waves of the sea of wickedness, against the antichristian combinations which are forming in all parts of the earth, against the attempts of Satan to overthrow or to pervert it, against all the violence and delusion and subtlety of the enemies—that it might be preserved by the mighty power of our God. And, oh! if, like the ark of God, it should at times, from the wrath of our God, fall into the hands of the enemy, may the enemy not prosper by means of it, but rather suffer all manner of ignominy and distress. And when the Lord shall have enough tried this city and this place, may the first rays of His returning favour be felt here, and His trodden-down standard be raised here, and the host of valiant men assemble here to preserve the standard of the Lord and carry it against all His and our enemies.

Brethren, it hath been so ordered of the Lord, that for the last week or two I should employ my leisure moments in reading the "Scottish Worthies," a book well known in every parish, and I may say in every cottage of our native land; from which I have gathered much encouragement and much confirmation to all this discourse. For when I perceive, first, what desolation was brought upon our land, as well as upon this land of England, by the ejection of more than one half of the ministers and their flocks,—what scattering of the sheep, what slaughtering of these harmless lives, what spoliation of their wives and children, ay, and which is far worse, what distractings of the faith and love of the saints, insomuch that they had not leave to think a thought, nor to speak a word, but were as it were un-

der the torture of the soul, wherefore hard words and unguarded sentiments would at times escape their throbbing hearts and grieved spirits;—oh! when I think of all these soul-harrowing scenes which this Church of Scotland endured for half a century from tyrannical power, proud prelacy, and usurping independency, it made me full of thankfulness this day that we were permitted by God's providence to gather ourselves together into this house without any one to make us afraid. And we are thankful, we are very thankful, unto our God, who, taking pity upon His persecuted saints, and being attentive to their prayers, hath permitted us, the children of the much-despised Presbyterians and much-persecuted Covenanters, to assemble here, with no mean state, in the capital of this empire, in this the chief residence of our kings, in the bosom of the Episcopalian Church, with the countenance of many of their ministers, and with the brotherhood of many of their people. I desire to thank God exceedingly who hath so exalted our horn, and made it to bud forth pleasantly. It is His doing, and wondrous in our eyes. Secondly, dear brethren, I had occasion to observe in reading this record of the sufferings of our Church, drawn up by one of my own kinsmen, that the parts of Scotland in which unto this day there liveth most of the ancient leaven of faith and godliness, were in general those which were most favoured with the ministry of the word, and the prayers and sufferings and martyrdom of many saints; while St Andrews and Aberdeen, and other places, which were most cold and cruel-hearted towards the people of the Lord, are in general those which seem still to be sown with barrenness, and with the stones of emptiness, and measured with the line of confusion. It is in the wilds, and moors, and mountains of the west and south which were bedewed with the tears and besprinkled with the blood of God's people, which were the chief scenes of field preachings and field sacraments, the hiding-places of unhoused ministers and unchurched people; there it is that the seed of the godly hath best withstood the withering blast of formality which blew over all the Protestant Churches during the last century; and there also it is that the Lord hath begun to visit His people again with ministers brought up in a better school, and prepared with a

higher doctrine, and a more holy discipline. Perceiving this, I am the more strongly moved to impress the souls of all this congregation, if they would have this house to stand for a beacon through the storm which we believe will yet arise, that they should set their faces to seek the Lord, and entreat Him most earnestly for the sake of this house, that there may ever worship in it a remnant of faithful people, and be born in it many sons unto glory, that if need be many plants may be reared up here which no storm shall be able to overthrow, and many witnesses whose testimony no fires shall be able to put to silence. I feel that everything dependeth upon you, your faith, your fervent prayers, your loving communion, your godly conversation, your love unto all the saints, your charity unto the poor members of Christ; above all, your pure and holy worship, your reverence of God's ordinances, your welcome hearing of His truth, and your gladness, your joy, and your thanksgiving over all His goodness to us and to His Church.

We have good reason,—oh, have we not good and sufficient reason!—to bless the Lord, and to rejoice before Him this day, who within these few weeks hath so changed our condition, who hath owned our work and labour of love, who hath brought us up hither, I may say, with music and with dancing, who hath instructed us from the lips of His most famous ministers, who hath not brought us in empty-handed, but given us goodly gifts. I bless the Lord with all my heart for your sakes that He hath united you together in the bonds of love; I bless the Lord with all my heart for my own sake, that He hath taught me somewhat of His precious truth for your further instruction in the mystery of His love. Blessed be the Lord that I feel no poverty, and know no want, but am made to abound in the knowledge of His holy word! Many, many are the stores of precious truth which He openeth to my meditations in answer to your prayers, not for me but for you, because He hath a love unto you, and would build you up in righteousness and in true holiness. And seeing the Lord hath enlarged our tents this day, and lighted up the narrow limits of our borders, we ought to apply to the Lord with renovated zeal, and occupy ourselves with renewed diligence, in order to

cultivate and people the new land which He hath yielded unto us. It is matter of great joyfulness that we are called to labour more diligently in His service. I rejoice in it exceedingly; I desire to rejoice in it with all my heart and soul and strength and mind. Blessed be the Lord who hath preserved the lives of those who reared this house, and that it hath not been stained with any man's blood; blessed be the Lord who, without any injury to any one, hath permitted the crowds to worship these three days in it in peace; blessed be the Lord who this day hath been with us hitherto; blessed be the Lord for all the goodness of which we have this day sought to make mention; the Lord this day add unto the Church of those which shall be saved! O brethren, ye who have not yet closed with Christ, accept Him this day for your Saviour. When you hear our testimony how good a master He hath been to us, come unto Him who is able to save your souls; come and know the Lord our God, who is merciful and gracious; come and worship Him along with us. Cast in your lot with us, for our lot hath fallen to us in pleasant places, and we have got a goodly heritage. Oh that the Lord, by His mighty Spirit, would convince some sinner by this record of His goodness which we have made! Oh that He would edify every saint! Oh that He would fill our hearts with gladness, and accept the offering which we now make of praise and thanksgiving to the memory of all His goodness!

PART II.

Having shewn you, under the former head of discourse, the great things which God hath done for us, whereof we are glad, and having endeavoured to render the thanksgivings which are due unto His faithful name, I do now, without preface or introduction, as having a large space to travel over, proceed to search into and set forth in order the ends for which God hath loaded us with His benefits, and given us to possess a house of worship and a tabernacle of testimony.

No one of you can be so ignorant of the divine economy, or dead to the sense of your own sinfulness, as to suppose that it is for any good thing in us that the Lord hath thus drawn us out from the vanities and follies and wickedness of the world, to sit with delight under the glad sound of the gospel, and join ourselves together as a church of the living and true God. Neither, we are assured, is it owing to any wisdom in our plans, or ability in our executing of them, that we have come to this measure of strength and prosperity wherein we now stand. For it is well known to the minister, and the session, and the communicants, and the congregation of this church, that we were an ignorant, and have been a rebellious people unto this day, whose wilfulness and wickedness hath been wholly overruled of God, and moulded into some measure of harmony and unity and obedience by the work of the Holy Spirit. And, therefore, it doth well become us to seek and to inquire into the end of such disinterested love and undeserved goodness anywhere but in ourselves; for surely we are but instruments whom God hath been pleased to employ for carrying forward the good pleasure of His will. Instruments, I say, and nothing more. Yea, and most unfit instruments, foolish instruments, weak instruments, and instruments which, until He took us up, were nothing and worse than nothing, being turned unto His dishonour and disservice, but withal instruments whose proper character is intelligence and will and affection; not mechanical tools or blind instincts, but high-born and nobly-descended, though deeply-fallen and incurably-diseased children of the reason of the Most High God. And forasmuch as God is light, with whom is no darkness at all, and who doth enlighten with the true light, and with a right spirit doth guide all through means of whom He would carry on His good and gracious purposes, it is at all times most dutiful—and then especially when He hath signally favoured us—to inquire with pains what may be the purpose which He hath in view therein; and, having ascertained the good end and purpose of the grace, to travail therein with all our powers and faculties, depending evermore upon the mighty working of His Spirit, and guided evermore by the wisdom and example of our Lord, and of the prophets

and holy apostles of the Church. Now, dear brethren, I have no doubt that as the great and highest subject of our thanksgiving appeared to be in our having the word of the gospel preached in our hearing, so I judge the first great end of God in erecting this other place of worship in this city, and occupying it with a church of faithful people, is—

That we might lift up and maintain a constant testimony for the sound doctrine of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is the first great end of the Church in all times, to be an ark of testimony for the truth of the acts and promises of God. Nay, more; this is the true definition of the Church: that it is a body of men chosen of God to preserve and keep alive, and shew forth in word and in act—in blessing and in suffering—through good and through bad report—the promise and the hope of the coming of the blessed Saviour, the Lord from heaven, the Head of the Church, the stable rock and immovable foundation of the universe of God, which is but like a rocking billow and a troubled sea, until He shall be brought in with great power and glory, and become the stability of all elect creatures, and the death of all rebel and reprobate creatures. Therefore, be assured that this, which is the living principle of the Church, informeth and moveth all the members thereof; that this end of faithful testimony unto His Son—which is the *primum mobile* of the system of God's providence over His Church—is also the spring of every particular acting and impulse in all its harmonious parts. And, being assured of this, that the Spirit which governs all governs every part of the administration of God, let us be at charges to carry the good purpose of the Lord into effect, by setting up here, and holding forth in all our quarters, a full and true memorial of the doings of the Lord in time past, and of His purposes in the time to come, for the honour and the glory of His own name declared by Christ Jesus, and realised by the operation of the eternal and ever-blessed Spirit. That the Lord hath begun to revive the good old Kirk of Scotland in this city, and to separate her somewhat from her entanglements, and give her room and scope for action, be assured is a token of favour and an omen of good for this the capital of the realm; an omen of good to the

commonweal of the Church; of evil to no Church, nor sect, nor party which holdeth the true faith, and desireth to live in the bonds of charity. That He hath given us this larger house and these goodlier appointments, is a call upon us to stand forth somewhat more boldly and prominently in the defence of the faith, against all the enemies thereof. There is that difference in the constitution of the Church of England and the Church of Scotland, that while the former is preserved by her formal liturgy and more exact ceremonies from declining so far away from the truth as the latter might do, she is hindered by her many traditions, by her authorised discipline, and her overbearing hierarchy, from ascending into the same region of liberty, and exalted height of devotion, and purity of discipline, which our Church may attain unto. We presbyters of the Kirk have a liberty of preaching, and an unshackled freedom of prayer, a power of accommodation to the wants of the times, of importunity according to the urgency of the case, an openness to the approach of the Spirit, and a faculty of reaching farther and wider into the treasures of the word, which all acknowledge, and which may, without offence, be stated as one of the good and great ends for which, we doubt not, God in His providence hath called so many young men to serve Him here, and given us a somewhat more prominent standing in the presence of His Church. God forbid that we should ever be caught with ambition, or possessed with envy of that Church which we honour as our sister in birth and tribulation, and in established honour; our sister also in doctrine and in testimony against the apostasy. But while thus we solemnly recognise the community of our origin and of our faith, and avouch our honest desire of sisterly fellowship, we are not, brethren, to be hindered from declaring the truth, which is obvious to all, that the doctrine of works is held forth by the dominant party of the Church; and that in the others, who are oppressed and borne down, there is a low and base leaning to Arminianism—an indecision as to the election of the Father—an unwillingness to preach and publish it—a stigmatising it with the name of Calvinism and Antinomianism, which is not for a moment to be endured, seeing it is to hesitate about the very essence of the gospel,

whereof Christ was but the great Prophet, but the will of the Father the end; and to substitute for the absolute will of the Father, and freedom of the children who are reclaimed by the Spirit to the obedience thereof, a base expediency and harmony with the world, which is the very death of Christ within the soul, and leaveth us hardly the life of slaves or of children, instead of the mightiness of men, and liberty and honour of adopted sons. Now, brethren, I do believe that, seeing our Church offered up hecatombs of martyrs—yea, I may say not hundreds, but thousands and tens of thousands—in solemn protestation against that detested form of the gospel, and will not, until this day, endure that the name of Arminianism should be even named with toleration in her borders, it hath pleased the Lord at this time to call into this city able ministers of her communion, and to call into public observation one of the least worthy of them, for the very end of maintaining the uncurtailed and uncompromising truth of His testimony upon which both Churches are founded; to help the Church of England against those who flatly contradict or lamely represent her standards; and to defend the true Church of Christ in her communion, and in all communions, from that measure of liberality upon vital questions and indifference to essential truth which must ever creep in upon the Church which doth not acknowledge the will of the Father as sovereign in her election, and in her preservation, and in her perseverance unto the end. And, dear brethren, though it be my office to lead the way in this testimony for the whole truth, it is yours to follow it up and support it both by word and act; mine it is to bear the standard, but yours to fight around it. It is the Church that hath the keeping of the ark; you are the Church, we are but the ministers or servants of the Church; but with you is the truth of the testimony deposited. There is yet another and a higher object of testimony, as I conceive, for which God hath bestowed upon us the grace wherein we now rejoice. I mean the testimony of a coming Lord to take possession of all power, and fill the earth with His glory; to be honoured in all them which believe, and avenged upon all those who obey not God and keep not the testimony of the gospel. The rankest

errors, the deepest darkness, the most culpable indifference subsisteth upon this point in the Churches, which are no longer looking forward with hope and with desire towards the glorious advent of the Lord, and the regeneration of the world, and the resurrection of the saints, but are yielding to every vain expedient, and pleasing themselves with every vain imagination of bringing about by natural means that millennium which is indeed Christ's kingdom in its beginning, its middle, and its end. And as the Jewish Church, when it began to lose sight of the Messiah, and was giving itself up to idolatry, was punished with the yoke of the universal monarchies, under which it still lieth bound; and as the Christian Church, when it began to hold loosely the desire and expectation of the Lord's second advent, was given into the hand of the usurper of Christ's Melchizedek reign, that is, the Pope; so I perceive that the Protestant Churches, from the same cause of not perceiving the testimony of hope, have been most of them given into the hands of infidelity, into which we also are fast passing, under the softer name of expediency. But I thank God upon every remembrance of the escape which He hath made for us out of this blind fantasy and wicked error, and of the readiness wherewith you searched the Scriptures and embraced the truth of this great doctrine of the gospel. And I believe this day, that these walls have been erected by the providence of the great Head of the Church, and this spacious house adorned, and that He will yet fill it with His people, for the end of unfolding more largely, and defending more completely, the great judgments, and deliverances, and hopes, and promises, which are freely given to the Church, in order that those whom it may please Him to deliver may indeed be delivered from the snare of liberality and expediency and vainglory, in which their feet have been snared, and that the Church may be made observant of the great and fearful providences which are about to be revealed in the world. Now, dear brethren, if, as I believe, we be a Church set and planted in this city for this great testimony of the way of salvation, by the election of the Father, the mediation of the Son, and the operation of the Holy Ghost—as set and planted for the testimony of the things

which are about to come; then remember, oh, remember! that we are like a city set upon a hill which cannot be hid; that we are as watchmen upon the walls of Zion which must not be silent; that we are like a band and troop of soldiers who have left the main army in order to get tidings of the coming enemy, and a little check his progress until the main camp be somewhat advertised of his approach. It is a perilous part of the campaign which, I judge, the Lord hath assigned to us; and it doth require good soldiership, much vigilance, constant sobriety, patient service, and diligence in prayer and expectation of the Spirit, who revealeth unto His people things to come; with constant perusal of those signs of the times which are written in the order-book of our great Captain, and left to us for guidance till He should come again to our head. Now, let not any one think that these words are spoken out of silly vanity, which are truly spoken forth with much fear and trembling—not in vanity with foolish boasting; for, in so presenting to you, dear brethren, the purpose of God in thus favouring us, I have done no more than I would do to any other church and congregation which I believe to be favoured for the same end of faithful witness, for which, as I said, I do believe the Church itself to be maintained in being; and when it faileth or faltereth in this testimony, then is it given over to some scourge of brutal oppression, or papal usurpation, or infidel destruction, in order that she may be chastised into duty. But if God hath signalled us out for the perilous work of leading the way in this bold and uncompromising testimony, then I believe it is because of the faithfulness of our fathers, who, as ye know, during the reigns of the second Charles and the second James, did die by hundreds and thousands in exile, at the stake, on the mountains, and on the battle-field, for this very testimony of Christ's royal office in His Church. They understood it not altogether, and were betrayed into some mistakes. Nevertheless, I will justify them before all men as true martyrs for the kingly office of Christ. The Reformers and their army were martyrs for the prophetic and priestly office of Christ, upholding the word of God as the only prophet, and the death of Christ as the only sacrifice; but the Restoration martyrs of the Scottish

Church, amounting in all to about eighteen thousand, were martyrs for the great doctrine of Christ the only Head of the Church, which, I take it, is an honour not conferred upon any other of the Protestant Churches. If the Lord, therefore, in consideration of the labours and sufferings and death of our fathers, should be pleased, now that He is awakening the Church to this glorious note of the gospel trumpet, and blowing another mighty blast, to make choice of a congregation of the Scottish Church to listen most eagerly to it, and retain its echoes, and sound it forth abroad,—is it to be wondered at, in His dispensations of grace, which extend to the children and the children's children of those that fear Him? In this city He hath given us a station, because in this city the battle of the faith will have to be fought, and the banner preserved, if it be preserved anywhere in the Gentile Church; for everywhere else, except in this island, it seemeth to be trampled and trodden under foot. Brethren, look to it, then, that He hath gathered us together to war a good warfare for that same hope for which our fathers poured out their blood like water.

Next to this first great end of all God's favours to His Church, to enable and encourage her to maintain the testimony of Jesus Christ, is that other of offering a continual worship in the congregation. For this end the Lord hath given us this house, that it may be a house of prayer as well as a house of preaching, and a house of praise likewise, where we may offer the weekly sacrifice of our devotion unto God, with whatever other free-will offerings any one may be minded to present. Whatever thanksgivings any one of the congregation hath to render unto the Lord; whatever petitions to request; whatever blessings to acknowledge, or bereavements to deplore; if any one have sinned any sin, or committed any transgression against the house of the Lord, which is the Church and body of Christ,—here it behoveth him, humbly and devoutly, with all grace and meekness, to make mention of the same. And thus the house becometh a common home to all families, when all families present their praise and pay their vows therein; and a refuge to all hearts, when all hearts unburden their load therein. And so it groweth dear and

holy in our sight, and gathereth around it a multitude of the most tender and the most sublime of man's associations, and becometh a house of God and a gate of heaven. And here also we present the offering of the whole Christian Church, praying diligently for all souls, and making supplication for the soldiers of Christ against all their enemies. And here also prayers and humiliations and thanksgivings are to be made for our nation; for the king as supreme, for all governors and magistrates, and for the whole body of the people; for our soldiers and sailors when they go out to war, and for all the servants and subjects of this great empire. And here we worship without a form, and without an image, the glorious Jehovah; pouring out to Him all the praises and adorations, and offering unto Him all the hosannas and hallelujahs which the Holy Spirit moveth within our hearts. O brethren, for what high ends this house is builded! to what most exalted exercises of the soul we are to devote ourselves herein! What knowledge, what faith, what ravishment of love, what joy of spirit! Again, what humiliations of soul, what confessions of sin, what deep grief and anguish of suffering for all saints, ought we not to experience in this place? Now, dearly-beloved brethren, how can these mighty energies of the soul proceed without much secret and family exercise of soul—without much observance of daily discipline, and constant watchfulness over the outgoings of the spirit? I assure you it is impossible that the Sabbath service can be anything more than a form, a formal solemnity, and a grave, comely custom, unless the soul be all the week striving after communion with the Father and the Holy Ghost. How shall the soul wing its way to the heights of Zion, and mingle itself with the worshippers of the upper sanctuary—rise, and soar, and lose itself in the sublimities of devotion and worship, if it hath not walked with God in secret, and by His strength surmounted the obstacles which are upon the surface of the ground? Think you the Spirit of God will come at the call of the minister, if ye have been refusing Him all the week? or that the mighty Spirit of God will all at once impart to you that strongest sustenance which should bear up the soul to the high pitch of worshipping in the assembly of the saints, and enjoying the ordin-

ances and sacraments of the gospel? As when men go up to the palace to pay their court unto the king, they attire themselves in costly and splendid array, and bear themselves in the most graceful fashion, and have their words well ordered; so we, coming up hither to worship before the King of kings, and to stand in His holy presence, ought to be furnished with extraordinary supplies of the Spirit of holiness, and to be clothed with the whitest and purest raiment which Christ bestoweth upon His Church. Now, brethren, forasmuch as I set public worship at so high a mark, and require so much preparation of the spirit for its right performance, I do proportionably value its outward ceremonial, and require that everything be done decently and in order, as becometh the house of God and the service of the great King. Therefore, I do exhort you all to set unto the stranger a good example of every decent and comely grace—of regularity, of solemnity, of attention, of reverence, of kindness and love. And if the stranger will not take the example, but will break down the rules of God's service, and the decorum of His house, then ought ye, without hesitation, and with a high authority —especially ye who preside over the house of God—to oblige conformity to the order thereof, and neither to suffer nor to permit any man, of whatever rank or station, to travel across the fences with which the Church hath fenced her ordinances around. I press this the more earnestly, knowing the evil days in which we are fallen, and, I may add, the licentiousness of the place, and the bravado-like boldness of that monster, called the public, which would press the Church and all its comely graces under its brutal feet. But they cannot, they dare not. We have a law and a statute over which they dare not pass. To interrupt and hinder the worship of God is justly accounted a high offence against the laws of the realm. God has given protection to His holy worship; and it is ours with all gentleness, yet with all firmness, to see it proceed and flourish under the protection of power which for the present He hath given us. So much, brethren, have I to say upon the second great end for which God hath shewn us the favour over which we this day rejoice—the end of worshipping Him in spirit and in truth, with all the heart, and soul, and strength,

and mind. And, oh! I pray you, dearly beloved in the Lord, to come up to this house as to a great undertaking of the Spirit, with all earnestness and solemnity of soul. I pray you to wash you and make you clean in the blood of atonement, and so to enter the courts of the Lord's house to offer incense in His holy place. And bring up with you your children and your servants, and sit down as families together to acknowledge your common Master in heaven. And come up in perfect love to all the congregation, that there may be no heart out of tuneful harmony, no spirit vexed with any grudge or grievance, no soul sick of malice or envy or pride. And I pray you to put away all ostentation and vanity even in the outward appearance, and come clothed, not in costly array, nor adorned with gold and pearls, but, as becometh saints, with good works outwardly, and inwardly with a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price. Thus gather yourselves into this house, and thus occupy your spirits while present here; and be assured the love of God will rest upon us abundantly, and He will greatly enlarge our souls, and magnify Himself in our salvation. No root of bitterness shall spring up in the midst of us, and no weapon formed against our prosperity shall prosper. For God loveth His own honour and glory, and He cannot withhold Himself from those who serve Him with an upright heart. He cannot deny His countenance unto them, nor refuse His ear to the voice of their prayer.

The third end of His glory, for which God hath done unto us these great things, whereof we are glad, is, that we might preserve amongst us the pure discipline of His Church, which being omitted brings along with it the desecration of the worship of God and the decay of the testimony of Christ, and many other evils of an inferior kind. As a sound creed of doctrine is the economy of the truth presented unto the faith of the people of God, so is a wholesome discipline the economy of charity and love presented to the communion of the people. Love is the ground of all discipline, and the economy of love is the grouud of all discipline in the Church of Christ. To regulate and guide the love of the catholic Church to the most profitable ends is the use of all its ministries. The

younger submit to the elder, the weaker desire the support of the stronger, the poorer are holpen of the richer, the wiser discern the truth, the more eloquent teach it, the more prudent govern, and all love and are obedient for the sake of the Lord, and for the good of the whole. If any one go astray, then all desire his recovery; if any one be afflicted, then all are afflicted, and have a desire to pray for him; if any one is offended, then all are offended; if any one need help, then all are ready to help him. Every one honoureth every other in his place, as being placed there by the great Head of the Church for His own honour and glory. Is it an inferior place? Then he honoureth him the more that he should fill it with the same contentment, and do its lower duties with the same alacrity as himself, who is honoured with a higher station. Is it a superior place? Then we admire the diligence with which he giveth himself to the occupation of his many talents, and the constancy with which he resists the manifold temptations of Satan. This is the discipline of the Church, dear brethren, when the whole body is thus edified in love, by every member gladly filling his proper place, and doing his proper office for the good of the whole. It is the economy and system of love, as the belief is the economy and system of truth; and we whom you have placed over you in the eldership are burdened with the observation and direction, with the husbandry and dispensation, of this your love and dutifulness toward one another. And we whom you have placed over you in the deaconship are burdened with the knowledge of the poor and the needy, and with the care of the outward order and furniture of the church, and with the receiving and laying out of your charitable offerings presented unto us for that end. I say burdened, because a burden truly it is, but one cheerfully undertaken in love to the Lord Jesus and to the church of His children, and for which we shall be responsible if anything should fall out here to the dishonour of Him that bought us, and to the offence of His precious members. Now, for any one to kick against discipline in the Church of Christ, or to make light of it, is truly to undervalue the Church altogether, and to despise the communion of saints, out of which discipline groweth, For if there be

any pleasure or any profit in the brotherhood of the saints then it is worthy to be guarded from offence, its rule and order are to be held sacred, and those who transgress against it are not to be slightly passed over, otherwise the visible Church becomes no outward similitude or presentation of the spiritual Church, but a contradiction and hindrance thereto, and a deception and a delusion to the world. If the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper be desecrated to common and indiscriminate use, their value will be lost sight of, and their very meaning in time forgotten, or, which is worse, they will be converted into the engines of priestcraft and the instruments of superstition. And if government amongst the members of the Church be undervalued or set at nought, and those who are over us in the Lord be slighted or despised, then rest assured, as I shewed at length, that all government, whether of the family or of the state, will soon come to be despised, or degenerate into the strife of rights, instead of being the sweet circulation of love. I say it, that the Church of Christ is the mother of all righteous government, and that her discipline is the parent of all order and dutifulness in the ranks of life. The Church casteth her silken net over the fierce beast of prey, and lulleth the savage into stillness; she then nurseth him with the milk of human kindness, and tameth him to works of well-doing, and so the forest of wild beasts becometh a field of human-hearted creatures, and the den of lions becometh harmless while the prophet of the Lord is in the midst of them. Being firmly persuaded of all this, and able at any time to demonstrate it from the reason of the thing, and from the word of God, and from the experience of the world, and the history of the Church; and being at the same time firmly persuaded that there is such a tide of radicalism and insubordination setting in upon this land as nothing can resist; and perceiving further that it hath won the ascendancy over the popularly governed churches, and that there is no discipline in the Established Church to resist it,—I am the more moved to press upon you my people, and upon you the rulers of this church, the necessity, the urgent necessity of modelling everything according to the standards of our Church, the Books of Dis-

cipline drawn up by our fathers. For I well do know from sad experience, that when the radical principle gets a footing the Holy Spirit departs; the croaking raven and the cooing dove, the ravenous eagle and the innocent lamb, not being more opposite in spirit than are the radical or liberal spirit and the spirit of love and holiness which prompt the Church of Christ. Therefore I exhort you, dearly beloved brethren, to the end that there may be the substance and ground of discipline, that you love one another in the Lord, and abound in honour one towards another, and that ye know one another, that you honour those who are over you in the Lord, that you guard against all insubordination, that you follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord. I commend first of all to you the churches of our Presbytery, that you may pray for them, and affectionately desire their prosperity in faith and in righteousness. Next, I commend unto you the churches of our sister Establishment, that you may love them as sisters in the Lord, and join with them in sweet fellowship as Abraham did with Eshcol and Aner when he went to do battle against Chedorlaomer, who had spoiled Lot. Then I commend to you all the churches not established which hold Christ the head, and entreat you to be patient with their infirmities and their misguided zeal against the established churches. For, brethren, I most solemnly protest before all men this day, and before God the searcher of hearts, that I love all who are joined unto Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit, of whatever name; and I entreat you to do the same. Possessing the convictions which have been given unto me concerning the backslidings of all the churches, it is not to be wondered at that I should have freely declared unto them what I have set forth; but God knows that it hath been in integrity of heart and in the spirit of love. Yea, before God I declare, that I love all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and that I esteem all who confess Him to be born of God, and all who confess Him not, to be of the apostasy. I will not call brother any one who denieth the Lord Jesus, though he were my own father; and every one who confesseth Him I will call brother, though he were my sworn enemy. But I am sure we cannot long be enemies, for all that are in

Christ Jesus are brethren. This is discipline, dearly beloved in the Lord, to have a tender love unto the Lord who redeemed us, and for His sake to hate father, mother, brother, and sister. Oh, establish such a fund of true charity in this church as may overflow in prayer, in benedictions, in holy deeds unto all the saints. I say, establish such a fund, and we, the elders of the church, shall be glad to dispense the same. When we come to the sick, we will say, Behold we bring with us the love and the faith and the prayers of the whole church. When we come to the Presbytery, we will say, Behold we bring with us the duty and the reverence and the subjection of the whole church. When we come to the throne of grace, we will say, Behold, O Lord, we present unto Thee the offerings of all Thy Church, who are united with us in presenting the offering of their heart and soul and strength and mind. And should any one offend, we will say, Behold, brother, all are troubled for thee, and desire to restore thee in the spirit of meekness. And should he be contumacious, we will say, Ah, brother, bring not upon thee the offence of all the church; behold, if it were better for thee not to have been born than to be an offence unto the least of these little ones, how much more all the flock and members of Christ? O brethren, I feel utterly unable to convey to you my idea of the discipline of the Church; it is so large, so varied, and so tender in all its applications; but it is all embodied in those two articles of the Creed, "I believe in the holy catholic Church, and in the communion of saints." Would that this communion of the saints were felt and understood! It would make all political confederacies and social delights to hide their head and bow to the perfection of love.

To these three great ends of divine grace, for which this and every other congregation of the Christian Church is built up and favoured of the Lord, I have now to add one of a more particular kind, applicable especially to our countrymen, the children of our Church scattered abroad in these parts. I consider that God hath vouchsafed a special blessing to our nation in London, by bestowing upon them this house of worship. While I trust all will look upon it as a benefit, they

may look upon it as more especially a benefit for which they are doubly indebted to God. Now ye know, dear brethren, how regardless of the worship of the Lord their God are the multitudes of our people become; how they wander like sheep without a shepherd; how they lay themselves open to every temptation of the enemy, and are taken in his wiles. You know how neglected are the poor of our nation in the lanes and courts and miserable hovels of this city. Let me tell you, with pain and sorrow, that of the multitudes who have sought help at my door, I have not found one, no not one, in communion with any church, or regularly waiting upon the ordinances of any church; and my brethren of the Presbytery give me the same fearful accounts of their experience. How it is with the multitude of the ingenious mechanics, whose very ingenuity often proves their ruin, ye know as well as I do; how it is with the multitude of educated men who feed the press and write for bread,—how it is with the young clerks of merchant houses, and the servants of our large companies and establishments, ye likewise do well know. Now, dear brethren, that the Lord hath given us enlargement of our quarters, let us go about like the good Shepherd to seek those strayed sheep,—let us entreat these frequenters of the streets and the highways,—let us press them to come in, that the house may be filled to overflowing with the desolate and forsaken children of our people. O brethren, I hope to see the day when hundreds of our lost and unknown, and unnoticed, and unvisited, and uncomforted poor countrymen, not able to provide themselves with sittings in this house, will have seats appropriated to them, and be helped out of the abundance of this church, and comforted with all its spiritual consolations. Now let us go in quest of them, let us search them out, and bring them to the house of God. Every one exhort his brother, let them not alone, give them no rest, bring them to sit under the ministry of the word, and to listen to the glad tidings of salvation. By so doing you are more serviceable towards their temporal welfare by restoring their lost character and reputation, than if you were to feed them and clothe them out of your bounty. Make it a rule to inquire at every poor Scotchman who comes

seeking help at your door, if he sits under the ministry of the word; and if not, say unto him, "Therefore hath God visited thee and brought thee low; and I am sure thou wilt not stand in His favour again until thou hast acknowledged this error in the sight of His Church, and addressed thyself to the correction of it." Do this, brethren, and I will call you lovers of your nation. Do this, and the Lord will shine with His countenance upon us, and bless us, and give peace to many souls in this place.

Is it that I love not the poor of the city where we are settled that I thus speak? Oh, no; the poor are of no nation, charity is of no nation: and so far from any feeling of this kind, I am about to propose that we should immediately proceed to take into consideration the wants of this neighbourhood where God hath planted us, and see whether it standeth in need of our help, and in how far, by schools and otherwise, we may be helpful to it. Already, by the blessing of God, we have been enabled to help the children of the poor, and comfort many a distressed family, and visit with the knowledge of the gospel many a distressed family in the quarter from which we have come forth. That labour of love we will not cease from, while we trust, if God increaseth our strength, that we shall be enabled to add thereto some work of charity and labour of love for the populous neighbourhood around us. Oh that the Lord would enable us to do some service for His Church, for the poor and the needy, the ignorant and the heedless! Oh that the Lord would enable us to lift again the religious character of our nation! Mine it is, dear brethren, to shew the way: but without you nothing will be effected. I do therefore pray every one who is not at present engaged in some work and labour of love for the Church, to meditate with himself before another Sabbath whether he might not undertake something, or help in some undertaking for the sake of the Lord and His Church, for the sake of this city and its unreclaimed myriads of immortal souls. "Who is a wise man among you? let him out of a good conversation shew forth his works with meekness of wisdom." "The poor have ye always." "It is more blessed to give than to receive." "Blessed is he that

considereth the poor; the Lord will reward him in the time of need."

Thus, brethren, have I instructed you in the great and good ends for which the Lord hath so exceedingly blessed us, for which He hath done such great things for us. And I have no time to add anything to what hath been said; only entreating you to remember for your encouragement that we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. The Lord sendeth no one a warfare on his own charges. We are not alone, but God is with us. God who hath begun a good work in us will perfect it unto the end. These things consider, these things take to heart, and let your profiting appear unto all men. Amen! Amen!

END OF VOL. III.

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